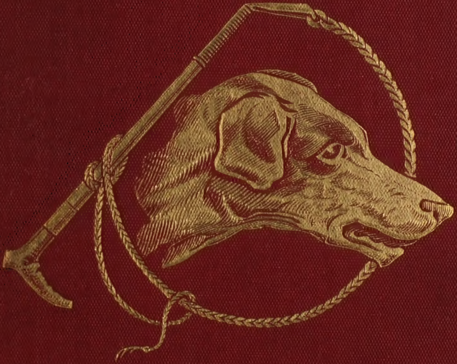
Kings of the Hunting Field



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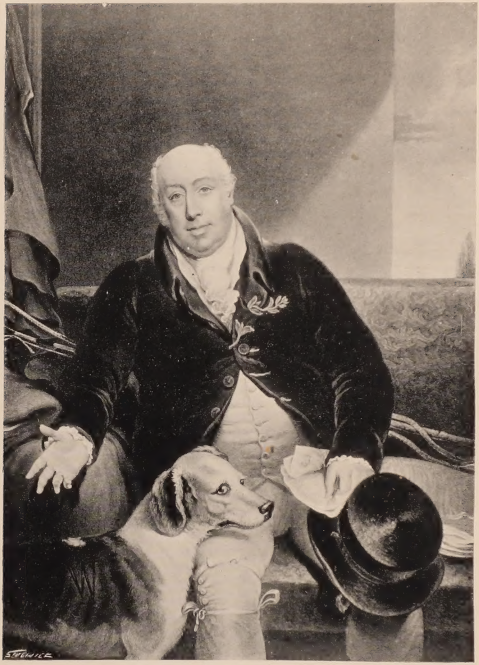

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KINGS OF THE HUNTING-FIELD

MEMOIRS AND ANECDOTES

OF DISTINGUISHED

MASTERS OF HOUNDS AND OTHER CELEBRITIES
OF THE CHASE

WITH

HISTORIES OF FAMOUS PACKS, AND HUNTING
TRADITIONS OF GREAT HOUSES

BY

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1899

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'En age, segnes
Rumpe moras; vocat ingenti clamore Cithæron,
Taygetique canes, domitrixque Epidaurus equorum;
Et vox assensu nemorum ingeminata remugit.'

VIRGIL, *Georgics III.*

'Hark, away,
Cast far behind the lingering cares of life.
Cithæron calls aloud, and in full cry
Thy hounds, Taygetus. Epidaurus trains
For us the generous steed; the hunter's shouts,
And cheering cries, assenting woods return.'

'My hoarse-sounding horn
Invites thee to the Chase, the sport of kings;
Image of war, without its guilt.'

SOMERVILLE, *The Chase*, Book I.

PREFACE.

THE elder DISRAELI, writing of 'Prefaces' in his *Curiosities of Literature*, remarks: 'A Preface being the entrance to a book, should invite by its beauty. An elegant porch announces the splendour of the interior. . . A good preface is as essential to put the reader into good humour as a good prologue is to a play, or a fine symphony to an opera, containing something analagous to the work itself.'

But the day of such elaborate prefaces as ISAAC DISRAELI discourses upon has gone. The public has no time to waste upon 'Forewords.' Like the great DUCROW it wants to 'cut the cackle and get to the 'osses,' and the only use of a preface is to warn the impetuous reader against rushing to erroneous conclusions as to the object and character of the book before perusing it.

Now, to prevent any possible misunderstanding, the compiler of the present work wishes to explain at the outset that it has not been his object to give a history of Hunting or set himself up as an authority on 'the Noble Science.' Those who seek information of that kind will find it admirably given in the volume on 'Hunting' in the *Badminton Series*, and in the exhaustive articles on the subject in the *Encyclopædia of Sport*.

In these pages I have simply aimed at giving interesting and entertaining Anecdotal Memoirs of some famous Heroes of the Hunting-field. Possibly some students of hunting lore may take exception to the inclusion of certain names and the exclusion of others. But I have been governed mainly in my selection by two considerations. First, the amount of entertaining anecdote obtainable, and secondly, the existence of a Portrait. If there are some names omitted which have a claim to be considered of higher merit than one or two which have been included, the reason for the omission is that there were not sufficient anecdotal data available to render such biographies interesting.

Then as to the Portraits. For the larger number of these I am indebted to the courtesy of the Proprietors of *Baily's Magazire*, from whose fine collection of steel engravings I have had the privilege of selection. Unfortunately, there are no Portraits extant of such celebrities as HUGO MEYNELL, JACK MUSTERS, JACK MYTTON, or Mr FENWICK BISSET, and in one or two cases I have had to be content with a portrait of some lesser celebrity of the Family or the Hunt of which I have treated. There is another point, too, on which I would say a word, and that is as to the dates of the portraits of some living Celebrities. The objection may be raised that they do not at all resemble their originals as they are at the present moment. But I contend that there is often a greater interest attaching to the portrait of a man taken at the time when he was in his full vigour and performed some of the great feats in the saddle herein described, than to one taken in his declining years. Every one, for example, knows what the DUKE OF BEAUFORT is like *now*, but how many are there who remember him as he was when Mr RICHMOND painted that romantic portrait of him which I have selected to embellish my sketch of his career in the hunting-field?

I have to express my grateful acknowledgments to the EARL OF COVENTRY, EARL SPENCER, the EARL OF LONSDALE, and Mr G. W. FITZWILLIAM, for the courteous promptitude with which they acceded to my request for their latest photographs.

And my thanks are also due to Messrs SAMPSON LOW & CO. for their kind permission to use the portrait of THOMAS ASSHETON SMITH, attached to the Reminiscences by the late Sir J. E. E. Wilmot, which I have had occasion to mention in various chapters of this book.

The portrait of JOHN WARDE, which forms the frontispiece, is taken from a fine mezzotint engraving of the oil-painting by JAMES GREEN, which hangs in the dining-room of Squerryes Court, now the property of Lieutenant-Colonel C. A. MADAN WARDE. The famous old fox-hunter had two favourite hounds, Glory and Beauty, the latter of which had just died when the portrait was painted, and the Master is represented as exclaiming: 'My Beauty hath departed but my Glory remains.'

JOHN PEEL'S portrait is copied from a daguerreotype taken at the request of Mr JENNINGS of Meadowbank, Curthwaite, in whose house I have seen the original. I learned from Mr JENNINGS that at the time the sun-picture was done, John, who had mislaid his own head-gear, was wearing Mr JENNINGS' hat, which was evidently too big for him.

So much for the portraits.

For the rest, I have not confined myself to the hunting side of the characters I have sketched, but have gone far afield in search of every kind of detail and anecdote which seemed to me to lend interest and amusement to the biography. So far as I am aware, no attempt has ever been made before to collect in one volume biographies of the famous Fox-hunters of Great Britain and Ireland; and, whilst I am conscious that the present attempt to supply that deficiency is very far from being exhaustive, I hope it will meet with favour from the large public that patronises the glorious sport of which it treats.

WINCHELSEA, *October* 1898.

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THE FATHERS OF FOX-HUNTING.

If Nimrod, that 'mighty hunter before the Lord,' could revisit the glimpses of the moon, and drop into England in November, he would doubtless view with supremest contempt the sport which we in these latter days are pleased to call hunting. All this elaborate preparation, all this excitement, all this vast expenditure on horse flesh, all these grandly bred hounds, with no better object than chasing a little stinking vermin-beast from one hole to another! The lion, the boar, the stag —these, indeed, were quarry worthy of a hunter. But the *fox!* The hunting instinct must have sunk low indeed in man, he would have said, if it can be gratified by the chase of such a paltry creature as this.

And, from that point of view, there *is* at first sight something odd in the fact that the term 'hunting' in Great Britain and Ireland has come to be almost exclusively applied to the chase of the fox. There are stag-hunting, of course, and otter-hunting, and hare-hunting, but they are dwarfed into insignificance by comparison with the supremacy of fox-hunting.

How was it, then, that the fox became such an object of reverence among English sportsmen and usurped the place of honour among beasts of the Chase? And when were hounds first entered solely to fox? These are questions more easily asked than answered. Fox-hunting, as we understand the term, is probably not more than a hundred and fifty years old.

250 years
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The squires of the early part of the seventeenth century had little respect for the fox. So far from Reynard's being preserved, there was a price set upon his head. The sum of one penny was paid by the parish authorities for every fox's mask, and these trophies were nailed to the door of the Parish Church. This curious fact I find stated in the diary of Nicholas Assheton of Downham, near Clitheroe, in Lancashire, written in the years 1617 and 1618. From the same source I learn that there was no close time for foxes, and they were as often coursed by greyhounds as hunted with hounds. If a fox could not be found, a rabbit or a badger would suit the sportsman just as well. Here is an entry of the diarist to the point:—

'*June 24th.*—To Worstow Brook. Tryed for a foxe: found nothing. Towler lay at a rabbit, and wee stayed and wrought and took him. Home to Downham to a foot race.

'*June 25th.*—I hounded and killed a bitch foxe. After that to Salthill. There wee had a bowson (badger). Wee wrought him out and killed him.'

From which I gather that the hounds, like their master, were not particular what game they hunted.

With the eighteenth century the fox rose into greater prominence, though still ranked far below both the stag and the hare in the category of sport.

In the first quarter of the eighteenth century there was a Mr Thomas Boothby, who had, as early as 1697, hunted what is now the Quorn country, and who is generally held to be the Father of Fox-hunting, as we know it. His claim to this title is founded upon the following inscription engraven on a horn, which is, I believe, still in existence: 'Thomas Boothby, Esquire, Tooley Park, Leicester. With this horn he hunted the first pack of foxhounds then in England fifty-five years; born 1677, died 1752.'

But there is another and an earlier claimant to the honour of establishing the first regular pack of foxhounds, and that is Lord Arundel, whose descendant makes good his ancestor's claim in a letter addressed to 'Nimrod' (C. J. Apperley), and published by him as a note in the reprint of his famous *Quarterly Review* essay on 'The Chase.' 'A pack of foxhounds,' writes Lord Arundel, 'were kept by my ancestor, Lord Arundel, between the years 1690 and 1700, as I have memoranda to prove;' but Lord Arundel does not make it clear after all whether the original pack *only* hunted fox, and the question is still debatable.

One of the earliest Masters of Foxhounds, of whom any detailed account is preserved, was Squire Draper, of whom the following particulars are given in the old *Sporting Register.*

'In the old but now ruinous mansion of Berwick Hall, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, once lived the well-known William Draper, Esquire, who bred, fed, and hunted the staunchest pack of foxhounds in Europe. Upon an income of only £700, he brought up creditably eleven sons and daughters, kept a stable of excellent hunters, besides a carriage with horses suitable for the convenience of my lady and her daughters. He lived in the old honest style of his country, killing every month a good ox of his own feeding, and priding himself on maintaining a substantial table, but with no foreign kickshaws. His general apparel was a long, dark drab hunting coat, a belt round his waist, and a strong velvet cap on his head. In his humour he was very facetious, always having some pleasant story both in the field and in the hall, so that his company was much sought after by persons of good condition, and this was of great use to him in the advancement of his children. His stables and kennels were kept in such order that sportsmen observed them as schools for huntsmen and grooms, who were glad to come there without wages, merely to learn their business. When they had obtained proper instruction he then recommended them to other gentlemen, who wished for no better character than Squire Draper's recommendation. He was always up during the hunting season at four o'clock, mounted on one of his nags at five, himself bringing forth his hounds, who knew every note of their old master's voice. In the field he rode with judgment, avoiding what was unnecessary, and helping his hounds when they were at fault. After the fatigues of the day, which were generally crowned with the brushes of a brace of foxes, he entertained those who would return with him, and that was sometimes thirty miles distance, with Old English hospitality. Good old *October* was the liquor drunk; and his first fox-hunting toast was *All the brushes in Christendom.* At the age of eighty years this gentleman died as he chiefly lived, for he died on horseback. As he was going to give some instructions to a friend who was rearing up a pack of foxhounds he was seized with a fit, and dropping from his old favourite pony, he expired. There was no man, rich or poor, in his neighbourhood, but lamented his death, and the foxes were the only things that had occasion to be glad that Squire Draper was no more.'

Now Squire Draper, I learn from other sources, was goaded into fox-hunting by the wholesale destruction of his lambs, and it was in the year 1726 that he first got together a pack for hunting the marauders. He was liberally assisted in his efforts by his neighbour, Sir Mark Constable, and probably was the only M.F.H. who has ever had a *lady* as his whipper-in. Miss Diana Draper was as keen a huntress as the goddess after whom she was named, and was invaluable to her father in the hunting-field. She had a rare voice, and cheered on the hounds as lustily as any male whip, and no doubt far more musically. But, like her namesake, she seems to have been so icily chaste that no bachelor was bold enough to woo her, or if any were, his suit was unsuccessful, for she lived and died in single blessedness. Escaping all the perils of the hunting field she reached a good old age before death claimed her, and, to quote a contemporary notice of her decease: 'What was more wonderful among sportsmen who dared not follow her, she died with whole bones in her bed.' Diana Draper lies buried beside her father at Market Weighton. It is hard to say which was the keener sportsman of the two. But we may safely challenge the annals of fox-hunting to produce another pair as unique as this Yorkshire Squire and the daughter who whipped-in to him.

But, on the whole, I think the claims of John Warde to be the 'Father of Fox-hunting,' are superior to those of any of his predecessors. He was at any rate the first really great Master of Foxhounds of whom there is any record. For seven and fifty years he kept hounds, and so good a judge as Thomas Assheton Smith declared them to be 'the best pack of hounds he ever rode to.' John Warde's experience was varied, for he hunted at least half-a-dozen different countries in his time. Born about 1752, he undoubtedly kept a pack of foxhounds, with which he hunted the district round his family estate of Squerries, near Westerham in Kent, prior to 1776. Up to 1780 he was in or about Yattendon in Berkshire; thence he migrated with his hounds to Oxfordshire, and subsequently to Warwickshire. In 1797 he was Master of the Pytchley, and held that post till 1808, when he sold his pack to Lord Althorp for 1000 guineas. Then he hunted the New Forest till 1814, in which year he became Master of the Craven, where he continued to show good sport until 1825 when he gave up the duties of a M.F.H. for good.

As may be gathered from his portrait, John Warde was a big jovial Englishman, yet, despite his great weight, he was uncommonly active and rode straight and hard to the last. In whatever country he was, he always showed extraordinary sport. Even in that wretched scenting country, the Craven, his hounds averaged their forty brace of foxes each season. Some of his runs were remarkable. For example, on one occasion in Oxfordshire his hounds ran through *thirty-two* parishes before they killed their fox. But his greatest run was on February 3, 1802, during his mastership of the Pytchley. They found a fox between Welford and Market Harborough, and killed him at Tilton-on-the-Hill, a point-blank distance of eighteen miles over the finest part of Leicestershire without touching a covert and without a check. The hounds slept that night in the kennels at Bowden Inn, where Lord Sefton, who then hunted the Quorn country, kept his pack.

Writing of Mr Warde as a sportsman in the year 1824, 'Nimrod' (Mr C. J. Apperley) says, 'I met Mr Warde's hounds again in the neighbourhood of Newbury. When mounted on his hunter, and in the midst of his hounds, I could not help looking at him with admiration, when I considered that I had before me a man whose long life had been devoted to fox-hunting, and whose character as a sportsman has always stood so high; whose name is every day quoted as an authority for some rule of conduct in the kennel, or as the author of some witty saying or pleasant joke; and, as I before observed, as a real sample of old English blood. My brother sportsmen will be happy to hear that he looks in high health and vigour, as a proof of which I was told that, being president of his club a short time since, and having, to use the words of my informant, "screwed up his party almost to the top hole," he pulled a fox's head out of his pocket and drank a bumper to fox-hunting. I do not know what weight Mr Warde now rides, but I do not wonder at his telling a gentleman who was out with him that it would be *the best recipe for his hot horse.* He reminded me of a celebrated character among the Welter weights in the Forest, who, on being asked what he weighed, replied that he was "two-and-twenty stone *on the weighbridge*," as much as to say, "no scales will hold me."'

John Warde was blest with a wife who keenly sympathised with his tastes. Once, during his Mastership of the Craven, things were so bad and he was so hard pinched to make both ends meet, that he told his wife he feared he must give up the hounds. 'Don't you do anything of the kind,' said she. 'Times must mend, and then you'll be sorry you gave up the hounds.' Like a sensible man, John took the advice of his better half. Not long afterwards, to his great surprise, he received a letter from his bankers informing him that £1000 had been paid in to his credit by 'A Friend to Fox-hunting' who wished to remain anonymous. When things were all smooth again, Mrs Warde confessed that she was the 'Friend to Fox-hunting,' and had provided the money out of her private purse.

Among the wise sayings of this fine old sportsman which have been preserved, I may quote two: 'Never buy a horse from a rich man who hunts:' 'Never believe a word any man says about a horse he wishes to sell—*not even a bishop!*' He acted on these maxims and relied solely on his own judgment in buying horses. The best horse he ever had, Blue Ruin, he chose from seeing him drag a couple of tons in a cart round Newbury market-place.

John Warde lived for thirteen years after he gave up the Mastership of the Craven, and died on December 8, 1838, in London at his house in Charles Street, Berkeley Square, having reached the ripe old age of 87. He was a fine specimen of the good old jolly, free-living, fox-hunting English Squire, a race now almost, if not quite, extinct, but in its day a notable factor in England's greatness and renown.

PETER BECKFORD.

FOUR members of the house of Beckford have, in different ways, contributed to render that name famous. The first of them was Peter Beckford, sometime Governor and Commissioner-in-chief of Jamaica, a public servant of some note in his day, but now forgotten. The second was his cousin, William Beckford, twice Lord Mayor of London, in 1763 and 1770, who boldly denied the right of the king to censure the Corporation of London, and defied obstinate old George the Third to his face, in defence of the rights of the City Fathers. The third was his eccentric son William, the author of that wonderful Oriental romance *Vathek*, 'England's wealthiest son,' as Byron calls him, who inherited a fortune of nearly a million sterling from his father, and squandered it all on his gorgeous 'Paradise' at Cintra, and his palace of mystery and magnificence at Fonthill. The fourth, with whom I am most concerned here, was Peter Beckford, grandson of the aforesaid Governor of Jamaica, whose *Thoughts on Hare and Fox-hunting* have to this day a charm for all sportsmen of literary tastes, and who stands out from among his contemporaries, the squires of England, as that *rara avis*, a scholar sportsman.

This remarkable Master of Hounds was the son of

Julian Beckford of Stapleton, Dorset, and was born there in the year 1740. He was educated at one of the Universities, but I cannot find any definite statement to enable me to decide whether it were Oxford or Cambridge. Perhaps, from the classical character of his studies, one may infer that it was the former. In 1773 he married Louisa, daughter of Lord Rivers, and by special patent granted in 1802, his son, William Horace Beckford, succeeded to the barony as third Lord Rivers. In 1768 Peter Beckford was elected member for Morpeth, and sat in the House of Commons for several years.

But cultured and accomplished though he was, Peter Beckford's heart was in sport. With the exception of William Somerville, whose long poem 'The Chase' is as full of practical information as of vivid word-painting, Beckford was the first English writer to produce an elaborate and accurate treatise on hunting, with some literary merit. In 1781 appeared the first edition of his famous and popular work, '*Thoughts upon Hare and Fox-hunting:* also an account of the most celebrated Dog-Kennels in the Kingdom.' And a year later appeared '*Essays on Hunting:* containing a philosophical inquiry into the matters and properties of scent: on different kinds of Hounds, Hares, etc., with an introduction describing the method of Hare-hunting among the Greeks.'

The Thoughts on Hunting were first published anonymously in the form of familiar letters to a friend. The book was supposed to be the work of a clergyman, I am unable to say why, unless it were that no mere country squire was thought capable of displaying so much erudition, and the author was charged with inhumanity, the more flagrant because of his sacred calling. In self-defence Beckford published a second edition with his name attached, and in the preface thus defends himself from the charge of inhumanity: 'All intentional cruelty the author entirely disclaims. His appeal from that accusation lies to those whom he addresses—his judges; not (as the critic may think) because they are equally barbarous with himself, but because sportsmen only are competent to decide.' And I think that appeal is both dignified and sensible.

I shall revert to these two works of Beckford's presently. But they are not by any means his only title to literary distinction. In 1787, just before the French Revolution, he, like Arthur Young, travelled through France and Italy, and embodied his impressions of travel in a very entertaining series of *Familiar Letters from Italy to a Friend in England.* The letters are most agreeably written and seasoned with racy anecdotes and with philosophical and political reflections, remarkable for their astuteness and penetration. Among the celebrities whom he visited were Voltaire and Rousseau, of whom he has much that is interesting to tell. He met Laurence Sterne too, in Italy, and to use his own words, 'passed hours with that eccentric genius that might have been more profitably employed, but never more agreeably.'

The fine old scholar sportsman, who, despite all his culture and scholarship, could hold his own as a trencherman and *bon vivant* against the hardest headed country squire in Dorset or anywhere else, lived just a year over the threescore and ten, and died on the 18th of February 1811. He lies buried in Stapleton Church with this quaint couplet on his tomb:—

'We die and are forgotten: 'tis Heaven's decree:
Thus the fate of others will be the fate of me.'

A writer in the *Retrospective Review* of July 1826, generally supposed to be Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges, the well-known genealogist, in the course of a long review of *Thoughts upon Hunting*, says: 'Never had fox or hare the honour of being chased to death by so accomplished a hunter from the time of Nimrod to the present day; never was huntsman's dinner graced by such urbanity and wit; and never did the red wine of Oporto confuse the intellects of so politic a sportsman. He would bag a fox in Greek, find a hare in Latin, inspect his kennels in Italian, and direct the economy of the stable in exquisite French. His talents and his eloquence he inherited; his turn for the pursuit of foxes was entirely acquired, and Mr Beckford, for that is the name of this compound of conflicting tastes, could never repress the innate disposition to better things.'

'*Better things!*' indeed! I should like to have seen Peter Beckford's face if any one had ventured to suggest to him that there were any *better things* in the world than fox and hare-hunting, and I think I should have backed him to give the *Retrospective Reviewer* a Roland for his Oliver had they discussed the comparative merits of the Chase in contrast with any other object of mundane interest.

But I cannot give a better notion of Peter Beckford's views upon hunting than by quoting some passages from his *Thoughts*.

On the wanton destruction of foxes by Masters of Hounds, Beckford held strong opinions, which he thus freely expresses:—

'No good country should be hunted after February, nor should there be any hunting at all after March. Spring hunting is sad destruction of foxes. In one week you may destroy as many as would have shown you sport for a whole season. We killed a bitch-fox one morning, with seven young ones, which were all alive. I can assure you we missed them very much the next year, and had many blank days, which we needed not to have had but through our own fault. I should tell you that this notable feat was performed, *literally*, on the *first of April.* If you will hunt late in the season, you should at least leave your terriers behind you. I hate to kill any animal out of season. A hen-pheasant with egg, I have heard, is famous eating; yet I can assure you, I never mean to taste it; and the hunting a bitch-fox big with young, appears to me cruel and unnatural. A gentleman of my acquaintance, who killed most of his foxes at this season, was humorously called, *midwife to the foxes.*'

The following instance of prolific bearing is, so far as I am aware, quite unique :—

'If one bitch have many puppies more than she can rear, you may put some of them to another bitch ; or, if you destroy any of them you may keep the best coloured. They sometimes will have an extraordinary litter. I have known an instance of one having fifteen ; and a friend of mine, whose veracity I cannot doubt, has assured me that a bitch in his pack brought forth sixteen, all alive.'

And equally curious is the following anecdote which hardly affords an example for imitation, I think :—

'I know an old sportsman, a clergyman, who enters his young hounds first at a cat, which he drags along the ground for a mile or two, at the end of which he turns out a badger, first taking care *to break his teeth.* He takes out about four couple of old hounds along with the young ones to hold them on. He never enters his young hounds but at vermin; for he says, *train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*'

And now by way of contrast let me give Mr Beckford's description of a terrible flood in the Stower, and a harrowing scene for any fox-hunter to witness:—

'The River Stower frequently overflows its banks, and is also very rapid and dangerous. The flood that morning, though sudden, was extensive. The neighbouring meadows were all laid under water, and only the tops of hedges appeared. There were posts to direct us to the bridge, but we had a great length of water to pass before we could get at it; it was, besides, so deep that our horses almost swam, and the shortest legged horses and longest legged riders were worst off. The hounds dashed in as usual, and were immediately carried, by the rapidity of the current, a long way down the stream. The huntsman was far behind them, and as he could go but slow, he was constrained to see his hounds wear themselves out in an useless contention with the current, in endeavouring to get to him. It was a shocking scene. Many of his hounds when they reached the shore had entirely lost the use of their limbs, for it froze, and the cold was intolerable. Some lay as if they were dead, and others reeled as if they had been drinking wine. Our distress was not yet complete; the weaker hounds, or such as were most affected by the cold, we now saw entangled in the tops of the hedges, and heard their lamentations—well-known tongues, which I had never before heard without pleasure. It was shocking to see their distress, and not know how to relieve them. A number of people were by this time assembled by the river side, but there was not one amongst them who would venture in. However, a guinea at last tempted one man to fetch out a hound that was entangled in a bush, and would otherwise have perished. Two hounds remained upon a hedge all night; but they got together before morning, when, the flood abating, they were found closely clasping each other, and without doubt, it was the little heat they could afford each other that kept both alive. We lost but one hound by this unlucky expedition, but we lost all our terriers. They were seen to sink, their strength not being sufficient to resist the severity of the cold and the rapidity of the stream.'

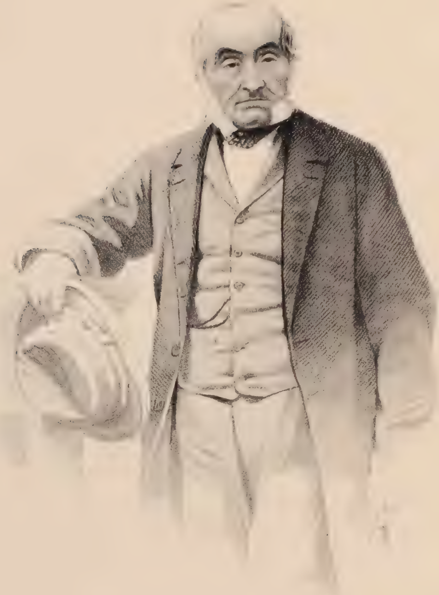
Here is a story of a bold attempt to cure sheep-killing in hounds which can hardly be called successful:—

'A late lord of my acquaintance, whose whole pack had often been guilty of killing sheep, determined to punish them, and to that intent put the largest ram he could find into the kennel. The men with their whips, and the ram with his horns, soon put the whole kennel into confusion and dismay, and the hounds and ram were left together. Meeting a friend soon after, "Come," says he, "to the kennel, and see what rare sport the ram makes among the hounds; the old fellow lays about him stoutly—egad! there's not a dog dares look him in the face." His friend, a compassionate man, pitied the hounds, and asked if he was not afraid some of them might be spoiled. "No, d—n them," said he, "they deserve it, and let them suffer." On they went; all was quiet. They opened the kennel door, but saw neither ram nor hound. The ram by this time was entirely eaten up, and the hounds, having filled their bellies, were retired to rest.'

Beckford, as I have said, was, like Wolsey, 'a scholar, and a ripe and good one,' and I can conceive him chuckling consumedly as he made a note of this wonderful example of classic quotation by a typical, uneducated, fox-hunting country squire, in the course of a speech in the House of Commons :—

'Is there any man in this House,' quoth this delicious orator, 'or in this country, who is not ready to bare his breast to the bayonet of an invader, or, in time of civil commotion, to lay his *block* upon the *head*' (a laugh) 'I say, sir, to lay his head upon the block, *pro aris et focis*—FOR OUR HARES AND FOXES?'

With which glorious specimen of free translation I take my leave of Peter Beckford and his *Thoughts upon Hunting*.



Fitzhardinge

THE FITZHARDINGES.

AMONG the very few aristocratic families who can claim to have 'come over with the Conqueror,' and can produce satisfactory proof in support of that claim, are the Berkeleys, of which line the Barons Fitzhardinge represent, by a curious anomaly, the elder branch. The first of the race of whom there is any trustworthy record was Roger de Berkeley, who fought at what is still known as the Battle of Hastings, despite all the efforts of the late Professor Freeman to force upon us the pedantic nomenclature of Senlac. Whether Roger were any worse than the bulk of the Norman adventurers who followed Duke William to England, there is no means of ascertaining. But I think he must have had some heavy burden of wrong-doing on his mind, which filled him with remorse in his latter days; for he turned monk and died in the odour of sanctity, within the walls of St Peter's Monastery at Gloucester, seven-and-twenty years after the victory which made William King of England. From that time to this, there has been no break in the pedigree of the Berkeleys, and there is no older baronial fortress and mansion in England than Berkeley Castle, the seat of the earl who is head of the house. Commenced in the reign of Henry I. in the year 1108, it was not finished till his successor had been two years upon the throne. An 'historic pile' it is, indeed, and history and legend have combined to invest it with gloomy but romantic interest. There still clings to it the stain of the foul murder of the second Edward by the

> 'She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs
> That tore the bowels of her mangled mate:

the dark deed which Gray's prophetic 'Bard' thus prefigured to the Conqueror of Wales.

> 'Weave the warp and weave the woof,
> The winding sheet of Edward's race,
> Give ample room and verge enough
> The characters of hell to trace.
> Mark the year and mark the night,
> When Severn shall re-echo with affright
> The shrieks of death thro' Berkeley's roofs that ring,
> Shrieks of an agonising king.'

Right valiantly was Berkeley Castle held in later days for the king, and when its garrison of 500 men, starved into surrender, marched out at last with all the honours of war, the Roundheads were glad enough to see their backs. Grantley Berkeley tells us how mad it used to make him, as a boy, to look at the grand old hall denuded of all its suits of armour, its trophies of war and the Chase, which 'the crop-eared knaves' had carried off as the spoils of their hard-earned victory over the stubborn defenders.

The Berkeleys were ever a race of sportsmen, and I have seen a vague statement to the effect that a Lord Berkeley 'kept thirty huntsmen in tawny coats,' and a pack of hounds, 'at the village of Charing,' with which he hunted the country round. It has been assumed that this village must have been where Charing Cross now stands, and that consequently there were Berkeley hounds in existence at some distant period, before London had linked itself to Westminster, as far back as the days of the Plantagenets. But I have seen no satisfactory evidence adduced in support of this tradition. Probably, however, the Earls of Berkeley kept hounds as early as the Dukes of Beaufort or Rutland, and this much at any rate is certain, that the pack, known afterwards as the Old Berkeley, was in existence when Frederick Augustus, the fifth earl, came into the title in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. It was a tremendous country which that eccentric nobleman hunted, stretching from Gloucestershire right up to Kensington, from point to point 120 miles, and to enable him to hunt it, he had kennels at Cranford in Middlesex, at Gerard's Cross in Bucks, at Nettlehead in Oxfordshire, and at Berkeley Castle. A few years before his death, which took place in 1810, the earl gave up his hounds and resigned a large portion of the country to the Old Berkeley Club, which continued to hunt the country by subscription till the year 1842, retaining the old Berkeley livery, orange plush or tawny, for the hunt-servants.

The fifth earl publicly married his mistress, Mary Cole, the daughter of a Gloucester tradesman, in 1796. She had previously borne him four sons, the eldest of whom, Colonel Berkeley, the hero of many scandals, claimed the title, on the ground that there had been a secret marriage nine years prior to the public ceremony. But he failed to prove to the satisfaction of the House of Lords that he had been born in lawful wedlock. His father, however, left him Berkeley Castle and all the vast family estates, comprising upwards of 20,000 acres in Gloucestershire and other counties, with a rent roll of £34,000, besides the even more lucrative property in London, on which Berkeley Square, Stratton Street, and Bruton Street now stand.

In 1807, Colonel Berkeley, who was subsequently created Earl Fitzhardinge, established the pack which has ever since hunted that part of the country, and is known as Lord Fitzhardinge's. With the vast wealth at his disposal the earl was able to keep up his hunting establishment in magnificent style, and he spared no expense upon his kennels and stables. In 1826 he engaged the services of Harry Ayris, one of the best huntsmen ever seen, who was never known to lose his hounds, and was a consummate master of his business both in the field and in the kennel; a very bold rider, too, over all kinds of fences, and as cheery a soul as ever threw leg over a saddle. The earl and his huntsman were well suited to one another, and no more characteristic pair were to be seen in England. The earl had his eccentricities, as will be gathered from the following sketch of him, given by the authors of *Country Quarters*.

'Lord Fitzhardinge was very liberal in paying for poultry said to be destroyed, and paid bill after bill without any demur, until one day a claim was made for a calf, when he said: "No, Ayris, no; they will send in for a sow and pigs next!" But I have heard of an old farmer who lived near Andoversford, who had lost a lot of poultry by a fox, till at last he was tempted to set a trap for him, and offered a reward for him, dead or alive. One morning a fox was brought into his yard in a bag, and the old boy sallied forth to deal vengeance, but the sight of the captive was too much for him. "Damn thee," he said, "I cannot kill thee;" and he had him put into the bag again, and turned out in a field—the jolly old fellow view-hallooing him clear away. When the old peer heard of it, he sent him the biggest salmon that could be found in the Severn, with his kind regards. A horse-dealer, whom for the sake of euphony I will call Sanguinary Richard, once came up to Lord Fitzhardinge, then advanced in years, and said, "I have a horse, my lord, which will just suit you; he is a famous galloper and a first-rate fencer." "Ah!" said the old peer, "can he stand still?"

'Amongst other of the old earl's peculiarities, he would always have black-puddings and toasted cheese for dinner at Berkeley Castle—though not touched they were bound to be there. The black-puddings were made by his French cook, and the toasted cheese, on which the earl particularly prided himself, was made from a peculiar kind of cheese which came from one of his farms. When travelling, or if at an hotel, and he wanted only a single glass of sherry, he always had a whole bottle for the good of the house, and he was always very liberal to servants. He constantly had a man with him to tell what the hounds were doing when in covert; and on one occasion, sending him to see what was going forward in a large covert, he returned and said, "I think, my lord, they are running down there." "Think!" answered the earl, giving him a thundering thwack over the shoulders; "I don't keep you to think. Go and bring me word what they are doing." As may be expected, the man returned next time with more precise information, when the earl said, "Very well; remember for the future to tell me facts, and not to think." He was always well supported both by the gentlemen and the farmers, and always had a good show of foxes, especially in the coverts of General Lygon, Sir Charles Cockerell at Seizincote, at Rendcombe in those of Sir William Guise, and Mr Brown of Hazelton always had a fox ready for him.

'It was a pretty sight to see the old peer arrive at a meet, when he was received by all assembled with almost regal honours. The hounds used to sit down and watch for him, and you knew he was coming by a general movement of their sterns. The old earl would get off his horse, and allow them to jump up and put their paws on his shoulders, no matter how dirty the weather, while he bent down to let some of his favourites lick his face. But the earl used sometimes to blow up in wonderful language, and he was no respecter of persons when out of temper.'

Besides his foxhounds Earl Fitzhardinge also kept staghounds at Cheltenham, where he and his old white horse were familiar figures for many a winter, and indeed, the residents of that fashionable watering-place owed his lordship a deep debt of gratitude for the sport of all kinds with which he so liberally provided them. On February 23, 1857, the earl, then in his 71st year, had a bad accident out hunting. While riding under some trees, his head came in contact with a branch, and he was thrown with great force. This fall, no doubt, hastened his end, though it was not the immediate cause of his death. He had gone the pace all his life, and it needed but this shock to start the break-up of a constitution which, strong as it had been, was already shattered. He died at Berkeley Castle in the following October, and I may mention, as an instance of the ruling passion strong in death, that the earl had some favourite hounds brought up to his bedroom, with Harry Ayris in attendance, only forty-eight hours before his decease.

The earldom died with him, for he never married, but the family estates went, in accordance with his father's will, to his brother Sir Maurice Berkeley, who, like himself, was illegitimate. From the portrait of Sir Maurice, which is given herewith, it is pretty easy to form an idea of his character. He looks the testy old sea-dog he was. Born in 1788, he entered the Royal Navy in 1804, and saw plenty of active service, though promotion was slow in coming. In 1840, when Mohammed Ali Pasha of Egypt and his son Ibraham Pasha defied their suzerain, the Sultan of Turkey, worsted his armies and obtained possession of his fleet, the Western Powers stepped in to preserve the Porte from absolute annihilation at the hands of its vassal. A British fleet, in conjunction with the Austrian and Turkish squadrons, bombarded Acre, whilst land forces besieged Beyrout and Sidon, and captured both places. In all these operations Sir Maurice Berkeley played a prominent part, and so distinguished himself, that on his return the Duke of Wellington appointed him First Lord of the Admiralty, in which capacity he introduced some important reforms into the navy. When war broke out with Russia in 1853, Sir Maurice, as senior Admiral of the White, had first claim to the command of the Baltic fleet, but unselfishly withdrew his claim in favour of Sir Charles Napier, who was then the popular idol, but proved himself utterly unworthy of the trust reposed in him; and on his ignominious return, after accomplishing none of the feats which he had boasted of his ability to achieve, there were many who regretted that Sir Maurice Berkeley had not been in command of the splendid fleet which made so pompous and futile a demonstration. For Berkeley was a dare-devil old seaman of the Dundonald type, and would not have been frightened by any scare of infernal machines from making a dash at Cronstadt, for all its boasted impregnability.

Like his father and eldest brother, Sir Maurice was passionately fond of hunting. In his early days he was known as one of the hardest riders in the 'Shires,' and when, after long years, he returned from the quarter-deck to the saddle, there was no bolder horseman in all the 'West Countree.' He had had the best of models in Harry Ayris, and he profited by the example, not only in horsemanship but in study of the 'art of Venerie,' for Sir Maurice was well versed in all the lore of the 'noble science,' and had formed his own independent ideas, of what hounds should be and how foxes should be hunted, from personal experience. Twenty-three inches was his standard, and he cared more for nose than symmetry. 'I don't care a damn for looks,' he used to say in his blunt sailor-like fashion, 'huntsmen forget to breed hounds for their noses, they're all for looks. Give *me* the pack that can kill foxes.'

The old seaman could speak his mind out, too, with the genuine briny vigour of the quarter-deck when the field displayed any restiveness. And, to the very last, when seventy years had whitened his hair and bent his frame, though they could not lessen his nerve, he was deeply offended if anyone jumped a fence in front of him, and expressed his feelings in appropriate terms, which made the ears of the offender tingle. The discipline of the Royal Navy, which so sternly exacted respect to a superior officer, was so deeply ingrained in him that he deemed it nothing short of flat mutiny for any member of the field to forestall the master at a fence.

In 1861, Sir Maurice was raised to the peerage as

Baron Fitzhardinge of Bristol, and, though in his 74th year, continued to hunt the country, which the late earl had parcelled out for himself, with undiminished vigour. He had a rare henchman in Harry Ayris, who carried the horn for him up to 1866, when a bad fall so seriously injured the veteran huntsman that he was compelled to resign. It was on that occasion that Harry gave a signal instance of his unselfishness and pluck. When his horse went down and he lay helpless with a badly broken leg, one of the whips and two gentlemen came to his assistance. But he would not have it. 'Go on,' he exclaimed impatiently, 'go on—never mind me—can't you see they're running into him.' Lord Fitzhardinge died in his 80th year on the 17th of October 1867, and his old huntsman survived him nearly seven years, for Harry Ayris did not join the majority till the 20th of April 1874. He had served with the two Lords Fitzhardinge for forty years and was much attached to both of them. Both were fine sportsmen, and in that capacity there was not much to choose between them, but as men, the old sea-dog was far away the better of the two. His language may have been coarse and strong sometimes, as was natural to a sailor, but his life was wholesome and cleanly, and his conduct decency itself by comparison with that of his elder brother.

Among the notabilities of the Fitzhardinge Hunt was Jem Hastings the famous runner, who for five-and-twenty years followed Lord Fitzhardinge's hounds on foot, not because he was too poor to afford a mount, but because he detested pigskin. Some of his feats were extraordinary. On one occasion he footed it four-and-twenty miles to covert, followed the hounds all day, was with them when they ran into their fox after a twelve-mile run, then walked back to Cheltenham, close upon thirty miles, and wound up the day's sport with a badger hunt by moonlight, having covered over eighty miles before he turned in to rest. It would be hard to beat that, as an example of mingled endurance and enthusiasm for sport.

Another equally eccentric character was Sam Curnock. Sam was also a runner, and, presumably, did well enough until he attained the age of sixty-six, when he thought it was time to give up hunting on foot, so he put forth the following appeal :—

'Petition of Curnock, the runner with the Duke of Beaufort's and Lord Fitzhardinge's hounds :—

'My dear Friends, Gentlemen Sportsmen,—I have taken the liberty of writing these few lines to inform you that I have followed the Berkeley and Beaufort hounds chiefly ever since I was eleven years of age, and never did but little else, so, gentlemen sportsmen, I wish to give you a just information of the distance I have been to covert in a morning. When I have left home I have been times without number to the meet. When the day's sport was ended I have been fifteen or sixteen miles from home, and returned home the same evening in a short time, besides a good run after the hounds.

'So now, gentlemen sportsmen, I hope that you will be pleased to take this into consideration, and be pleased to allow me thirty pounds per annum for the support of me and my wife, from all of you, gentlemen sportsmen, as I am in the year of 67, and I begin to find the time of life, and I will return you many thanks for your kindness ; and, gentlemen sportsmen, I wish you all long life with happiness, as the last season might be the last for me. So, gentlemen sportsmen, I must conclude by saying God save the Queen and all the Royal Family, and all you, gentlemen fox-hunters. Gentlemen, I am Samuel Curnock, the old runner of North Sibley, Gloucestershire.'

The story goes, that instead of getting the thirty pounds a year for which he asked, he had nearer fifty.

Lord Fitzhardinge the second was succeeded in his title and estates and in the mastership of the Fitzhardinge hounds by his son Sir Francis William Fitzhardinge Berkeley, who was born in 1826, educated at Rugby under Arnold, and saw a good deal of varied life in the Far West before joining the Blues, with whom he was immensely popular. He was full of fun and high animal spirits; he possessed, moreover, a fund of dry humour that made him an inimitable *raconteur*. When he succeeded to the title and estates and settled at Berkeley Castle, he became as popular among the Gloucestershire farmers as he had been among his brother officers of the Blues. There are fine horsemen and bold riders down there, but Lord Fitzhardinge found none who could beat him with his light weight across the Berkeley Vale, mounted on such flyers as The Pope and Citizen. One innovation he made which, perhaps, was not universally popular: he abolished the orange plush or 'Berkeley tawny' as the uniform of the Hunt, and went back to the old scarlet with black collar which had been in vogue in his grandfather's time.

The third Lord Fitzhardinge kept up the traditional excellence of the hounds and hunting establishment, and died deeply regretted by all who knew him in 1896.

He was a worthy scion of a fine old sporting stock, and he himself would have wished for no better epitaph than that. His successor in the title, estates and mastership of the hounds, is his brother Charles Paget Fitzhardinge Berkeley, a good sportsman and the last of a race who, whatever their faults may have been, had at least the merit of being princely patrons of the Chase.

SQUIRE FORESTER AND TOM MOODY.

OF the two names thus placed in juxtaposition, one is still familiar in our mouths as a household word—the other is unknown, except to the very few who have preserved the legends and traditions of the hunting-field.

Squire Forester, the fine old English sportsman and Master of Hounds, is forgotten. Tom Moody, the beer-loving dare-devil whipper-in, is immortalised. And yet, if merit were any claim to renown, the positions of the two should have been reversed; for, both as a man and a sportsman, the master was incomparably superior to the servant. But Tom Moody had a much surer passport to fame than worth. It was his good fortune to fall in the way of a *vates sacer* who sang his praises and gave undying glory to his name. Charles Dibdin's famous song has kept the memory of Tom Moody green, and will keep it green for ever. 'Tis a rare gift these poets have—the gift of conferring an immortality of shame or honour, but they sometimes use it rather recklessly and indiscriminately. Still, though Tom Moody perhaps hardly deserved the celebrity the great song-writer has secured him, I think sportsmen, at any rate, will admit that if the Muse of Poesy had never found a less worthy object for commemoration than the exploits of honest Tom there would have been little cause for complaint against her.

George Forester's forbears had been settled in Shropshire for some hundreds of years before he came into the world, and Willey Hall, the place of his birth, was as good a specimen of a quaint old English manor-house as you could have found in England. Nestling in a wooded hollow, with its many gables, its fine massive Tudor chimneys, its ivy-covered walls, it looked as picturesque and comfortable a dwelling-place as any country squire could wish for. And the interior did not belie the promise of the exterior. The spacious oak-panelled hall, the walls hung with old armour, swords, battle-axes, antique firearms and trophies of the Chase, the logs blazing in the capacious fireplace, the grim portraits of the squire's ancestors looking down from the wainscoted walls of the dining-room, all combined to make such a picture of old-world life as would have delighted the heart and inspired the pen of Washington Irving.

And the master of Willey Hall was a country gentleman of the good old Sir Roger de Coverley sort. No one was ever turned empty away from his hospitable doors. There was always plenty of broken victuals to be had for the fetching, and for all comers a tankard of good home-brewed ale, a slice of cold mutton, and as much bread and cheese as a hungry man could eat. It is true that Squire Forester's morals were looser than would be tolerated nowadays, for he kept a whole harem of rustic beauties, and preferred the freedom of his illicit amours to the strict bonds of wedlock. But his jovial, easy-going neighbours condoned this little weakness of the squire's in consideration of his many sterling qualities, and much liberty was allowed to a bachelor in those days. Occasionally some of these ladies would create a little scandal by either quarrelling among themselves or making things hot for the squire. There was a Miss Phœbe Higgs, renowned all round that country side for her daring feats in the saddle, who twice threatened to shoot Squire Forester unless he raised her allowance to an equality with that of a rival whom she thought to be too highly favoured. This determined Amazon actually on one occasion clapped a loaded pistol to the squire's head and refused to withdraw it until he had written and signed the document she desired. But for the most part the squire contrived to live at peace with all the world—both men *and* women.

As a sportsman, Squire Forester was in every way admirable, and during his long tenure of Willey Hall it was as famous for its good sport as its good cheer. They were a hardy race those great-grandfathers of ours. The day before a big meet, the guests would arrive at Willey Hall, all ready, booted and spurred, sit down to a grand old English dinner at 4 P.M., and never leave the table till they mounted their horses soon after daybreak for the day's sport. The squire always breakfasted on hunting mornings at 4 A.M. The meal consisted of underdone beef, washed down with eggs beaten up in brandy, and, thus fortified, he was prepared for a fifty-mile ride if need be. It was no unusual thing to see Tom Moody, his famous whipper-in, taking the hounds to covert before daylight, and they would often stick to the sport till it was too dark to see the hounds. The squire was a madcap, devil-may-care rider when the handsome Phœbe Higgs was out. She would egg him on to the wildest feats, taking the most daring leaps, beckoning him to follow, till he vowed there was no woman in England to compare with her, and would offer to back her for 500 guineas to ride against any horsewoman in the world. With the Amazonian Phœbe, Tom Moody and a few more such choice spirits in the field, it will be gathered that sport with Squire Forester's hounds was occasionally somewhat of the wildest. Mr John Randall in his delightful recollections of 'Old Sports and Sportsmen' in Shropshire, to which I am considerably indebted for anecdotes of the squire and Tom Moody, gives the following graphic picture of a moonlight run :—

An old man, speaking of Mr Stubbs, for whom, he remarked, the day was never too long, and who, at its close, would sometimes urge his brother sportsmen to draw for a fresh fox with the reminder that there was a moon to kill by, said, 'One of the rummiest things my father, who hunted with the squire, told me, was a run by moonlight. I am not sure, but I think Mr Dansey, Mr Childe and Mr Stubbs, if not Mr Meynell, were at the Hall. Howsomever, there were three or four couples of fresh hounds at the kennels, and it was proposed to have an after-dinner run. They dined early, and, as nigh as I can tell you, it was three o'clock when they left the Hall after the Beggarlybrook fox. Mind, that was a fox, that was—he was. He was a dark brown one, and a cunning beggar too, that always got off at the edge of a wood by running first along a wall, and then leaping part of the way down an old coal-pit which had run in at the sides.

'Well, they placed three couples of hounds near to this place, in readiness, and the hark-in having been given, the gorse soon began to shake, and a hound or two were seen outside, and amongst them old Pilot, who now and then took a turn outside, and turned in, lashing his stern, and giving the right token. "Have at him!" shouted one; "Get ready!" said another; "Hold hard a bit, we shall have him for a hundred!" shouted the squire. "Then comes a tally-ho," said my father, "and off they go; every hound out of cover, sterns up, carrying a beautiful head, and horses all in a straight line along the open, with the scent breast high. Reynard making straight for the tongue of the coppice, finds himself circumvented, and fresh hounds being let loose, he makes for Wenlock Walton, as though he was going to give 'em an airing on the hill-top.

> "But headed and foiled his first point he forsook,
> And merrily led them a dance o'er the brook."

'Some lime-burners coming from work turned him, and leaving Wenlock on the left he made for Tickwood. It was now getting dark, and the ground being awkward one or two were down. The squire swore he would have the varmint out of Tickwood; and the hounds working well, and old Trumpeter's tongue being heard on the lower side, one challenged the other, and they soon got into line in the hollow, the fox leading. Stragglers got to the scent, and off they went by the burnt houses, where the squire's horse rolled over into a sand-pit. The fox made for the Severn, but turned in the direction of Buildwas, and was run into in the moonlight, among the ivied ruins of the Abbey.'

How grimly resolute the squire could be in following his quarry is illustrated by the following anecdote, also given by Mr John Randall:—

'Old Tinker was the name of a fox with more than the usual cunning of his species, that had often proved more than a match for the hounds; and one morning the squire, having made up his mind for a run, repaired to Tickwood, where this fox was put up. On hearing the hounds in full cry the squire vowed he would "Follow the devil this time to hell's doors, but he would catch him." Reynard went off in the direction of the Clee Hills; but took a turn, and made for Thatcher's Coppice; from there to the Titterstone Hill, and then back to Tickwood, where the hounds again ousted him, and over the same ground again. On arriving at the Brown Clee Hills the huntsman's horse was so blown that he took Moody's and sent Tom with his own to the nearest inn to get spiced ale and a feed. By this time the fox was on his way back, and the horse on which Tom was seated no sooner heard the horn sounding than he dashed away and joined in the chase.

'Ten couples of fresh hounds were now set loose at the kennels in Willey Hollow, and these again turned the fox in the direction of Aldenham; but all besides Moody were now far behind, and his horse fell dead beneath him. The hounds, too, had had enough; they refused to go further, and Old Tinker once more beat his pursuers, but only to die in a drain on the Aldenham estate, where he was found a week afterwards.'

But let me turn now for a moment from Squire Forester to his celebrated whipper-in, Tom Moody. Tom was apprenticed to a maltster named Adams when he was fortunate enough to attract the attention of the fox-hunting squire. The lad had been sent by his master one day to deliver malt at Willey Hall, and Mr Forester watched him with keen delight sending his sturdy cob time after time at the gate till he made the obstinate beast leap it.

'I must have that lad,' said Squire Forester. 'I'll make something of him before I've done with him.'

So the squire went to the boy's mother, and then to his master, and finding that both were agreeable to let him go to the Willey Hall stables, took Tom Moody on as a help. Tom very soon became a favourite, not only with his master, but with every one about the place. He was good-natured and obliging, and his dare-devil courage was the admiration of his fellow-servants, who encouraged him in his wild pranks. Tom could not be sent on the commonest errand without making an adventure of it. It was neck or nothing with him, whatever the animal he happened to be riding.

On one occasion he had been driving some guests from Willey Hall to Shifnal, the nearest point at which they could pick up a coach, and coming back in charge of the squire's buff-coloured chaise, he had words with the pike-keeper, who did not open the gate quick enough to please the impetuous Thomas. The pike-keeper naturally resented the youngster's impudence, and the consequence was they had a turn-up, with the result that Tom, to use the Salopian vernacular, 'tanselled the hide' of the pike-keeper. Thenceforward Tom resolved that he would not trouble his enemy to open the gate; and, to the amazement of the pikeman, on the next occasion he came that way Moody drove straight up to the gate, gave a spring, touched his horse on the flanks, and went clean over, chaise and all, without starting a stitch or breaking a buckle. Pleased with his success Tom tried the trick again but this time, though the horse cleared the gate, the chaise stuck on the top rail.

'That just serves 'ee right,' said the pike-keeper.

'So it does, old chap,' retorted Tom, 'and now we're quits.'

Whereupon they shook hands and made friends; but Tom had another try at the gate, and cleared it just for the fun of the thing, and because he didn't like being beaten.

He was but a little chap, about five feet six inches in height, and he never scaled much more than eight stone; his round pock-marked face was full of good humour, and his little eyes twinkled with fun. Yet his spare frame was wonderfully muscular; he was as strong as a little Highland bull, and he didn't know what fear meant. He made as light of stone walls and five-feet-six-inch gates as if they were three-feet hurdles.

An old gossip of Shifnal, who knew Tom well, used to say, 'Ay, ay, sir, you should have seen him on his horse, a mad, wild animal no one but Tom could ride. *He* could ride him, though, with his eyes shut, savage as he was, and on a good road he would pass the milestones as the clock measures minutes: but give him the green meadows, and Lord! how I have seen him whip along the turf.'

Squire Forester always maintained that Tom was the best whipper-in in England, and this was praise and fame enough for honest Tom. He had no higher ambition. 'The Druid' quotes the opinions of some of Tom's fellow hunt-servants, which are somewhat disparaging, but then the last persons in the world from whom one can expect fair criticism of a man are those of his own calling—professional jealousy and prejudice, or what Charles Reade calls 'trade-malice' almost invariably bias the estimate of a man's fellow-workers; therefore, when I find old Stephen Goodall, who was huntsman to Mr Corbet's hounds during the short time Moody was whip there, saying that, 'Tom was fonder of fishing in the Severn than of hunting, and fonder of ale than either,' I take that statement with a very liberal grain of salt. No doubt, however, Tom was too fond of his ale, and Goodall tells an amusing story in illustration of Moody's bibulous propensities. One frosty morning it was decided to let the hounds wait an hour or two in the hope that the sun would take the bone out of the ground. The huntsman and whips adjourned to the servant's hall, where ale was liberally supplied.

'Now, Tom,' said Goodall, 'there's something to do to-day; don't you be too free with the ale.'

'Right; I won't, master,' replied Moody. 'I'll sit opposite you, and you tread on my foot if you see me getting on too fast.'

Presently a big Newfoundland dog crept in unnoticed, and, stealing under the table, trod on Tom's foot.

'Oh come, hang it, master,' cried the indignant whip, 'I've only had one horn yet—easy with your foot.'

There was a hearty laugh at Tom's expense when his canine monitor was revealed to him.

With the exception of that brief sojourn with Mr Corbet at Sundorne, Tom Moody spent all his life in the service of Squire Forester. And that good sportsman used to say that none could bring up the tail end of a pack or sustain the burst of a long chase and be in at the death, with every hound well up, like Tom. His plan was to allow his hounds their own cast without lifting, unless they showed wildness ; and if young hounds dwelt on a stale 'drag' behind the pack he whipped them on to those on the right line. His voice was extraordinary. Once when he fell into an old pit-shaft he frightened half the neighbourhood with his stentorian view-holloa, booming up from the bowels of the earth, till a party set out to rescue him, guided to the spot by those well-known accents. His holloa was distinguished by its wonderful variety of modulations, and when he gave his 'who-who-whoop' in the big servant's kitchen at Willey Hall, he set all the cups and saucers dancing, and made every old oaken beam vibrate to the ringing tones.

There was a particular road-side inn which Tom favoured, where the coaches pulled up for relays and refreshment, and travellers would often stop to listen to Tom's yarns of sport, for he was a born *raconteur*, and accompanied his stories with most effective acting. To hear him sing 'A Southerly Wind and a Cloudy Sky,' and wind up with one of his tremendous holloas, was a thing to remember with pleasure.

But all these gifts and graces would have failed to preserve Tom Moody's memory, had not Charles Dibdin, in a lucky hour for the whipper-in, come down on a visit to Willey Hall. A right jovial reception the famous song-writer had, and being himself a noted *bon vivant*, he thoroughly appreciated the squire's good cheer and noble liquor. The Shropshire fox-hunters gave the Londoner a taste of their quality as hard drinkers, but found their match in the seasoned old Cockney toper. The local Incledon, a blind man named Larry Palmer, was brought in to sing some of Dibdin's most popular songs, and sang them so well that the composer declared that he had never heard better justice done to his compositions. The company kept the ball rolling into the small hours of the morning, and then a ludicrous incident happened, which I quote from Mr Randall as an illustration of the coarseness of the manners of the time, and the boyish love of practical joking in vogue even among grey beards.

'Then some one told the tale of Old Tinker's last run; the last bit of court scandal was discussed, and the festivities of the evening had extended into the small hours of the morning, when during a brief pause in the general mirth a tremendous crash was heard, and the squire, rushing out to see what was the matter, met one of the servants, who said the sound came from the larder, whither Mr Forester repaired. Looking in he saw Parson Stephens *in his shirt*, and with presence of mind turned the key, and went back to his company to consider how he should turn the incident to account.

'It appears that Stephens had been some time in bed, when, waking from his first sleep, he fancied he should like a dip into the venison pie, and forthwith had gone down into the larder, where, in searching for the pie, he knocked down the dish with one or two more. The squire was not long in making up his mind. He declared it was time to retire; but before doing so they must have a country dance, and insisted on the whole household being roused to take part in it. There was no resisting the wishes of the host; the whole of the house assembled, and formed sides for a dance in the hall, through which Stephens must necessarily pass in going to his room. Whilst this was taking place, Mr Forester slipped the key into the door, and going behind Stephens, unkennelled his fox, making the parson run the gauntlet in his shirt, amid an indescribable scene of merriment and confusion!

'The Rev. Dr Stephens had paid for his nocturnal escapade, one would have thought, sufficiently to satisfy the most exacting. But the squire and his guests, just ripe for fun, insisted that he should dress and come down into the dining-room to finish the night—or morning—which closed in with Dibdin singing his last new song to music of his own composing, with a jolly rollicking chorus by the whole company.'

It was during this visit as far as I can make out—for there is a haziness about the date of it—that Dibdin made the acquaintance of Tom Moody, then falling into the sere, the yellow leaf. Squire Forester had previously to this given up hunting, and his hounds went to Aldenham as a trencher pack,—that is to say, the farmers of the neighbourhood agreed each to keep two or three hounds. They were collected the night before the meet, fed after the day's sport, and then dismissed with a crack of the whip, each hound going to his own farm. This dispersal of the squire's pack was a terrible blow to Tom Moody—he fairly broke down and cried when he saw the hounds that he knew and loved so well leaving the old kennels, and begged to be allowed to keep one very old favourite; and with this old friend the disconsolate whipper-in might be seen sunning himself in the deserted courtyard of Willey Hall. Towards the end of the year 1796, Tom began to break up, and feeling that his end was near, sent for his old master. When the squire came, honest Tom thus addressed him:—

'May it please you, squire, I have one request to make, and it is the last favour I shall ask.'

'Well, what is it, Tom?'

'My time here, master, won't be long, and when I'm dead, I wish to be buried at Barrow, under the yew-tree in the churchyard there, and to be carried to the grave by six earth-stoppers: my old horse, with my whip, boots and spurs and cap slung on each side of the saddle, and the brush of the last fox, when I was up at the death, at the side of the forelock, and two couple of old hounds to follow me to the grave as mourners. When I am laid in my grave let three halloos be given over me: and then if I don't lift up my head you may fairly conclude that Tom Moody is dead.'

The following letter from the squire to his friend Mr Chambers will show how faithfully the old whipper-in's dying wishes were carried out.

'DEAR CHAMBERS,—On Tuesday last died poor Tom Moody, as good for rough and smooth as ever entered Wildman's Wood. He died brave and honest, as he lived—beloved by all, hated by none that ever knew him. I took his own orders as to his will, funeral, and every other thing that could be thought of. He died sensible and fully collected as ever man died—in short, died game to the last; for when he could hardly swallow, the poor old lad took the farewell glass for success to fox-hunting and his poor old master (as he termed it), for ever. I am his sole executor, and the bulk of his fortune he left to me—six and twenty shillings, real and *bonâ fide* sterling cash, free from all incumbrance, after every debt discharged to a farthing. Noble deeds for Tom, you'd say. The poor old ladies at the Ring of Bells are to have a knot each in remembrance of the poor old lad.

'Salop paper will show the whole ceremony of his burial, but for fear you should not see that paper, I send it to you as under.

'"Sportsmen, attend.—On Tuesday, 29th inst., was buried at Barrow, near Wenlock, Salop, Thomas Moody, the well-known whipper-in to G. Forester, Esq.'s fox-hounds for twenty years. He was carried to the grave by a proper number of earth-stoppers, and attended by many other sporting friends, who heartily mourned for him."

'Directly after the corpse followed his old favourite horse (which he always called his 'Old Soul'), thus accoutred: carrying his last fox's brush in front of his bridle, with his cap, whip, boots, spurs, and girdle across the saddle. The ceremony being over, he (by his own desire), had three clear, rattling view-halloos o'er his grave; and thus ended the career of poor Tom, who lived and died an honest fellow, but alas! a very wet one.

'I hope you and your family are well, and you'll believe me much yours,

'G. FORESTER.'

Willey, Dec. 5, 1796.

It was said that Tom kept on his livery to the last and died in his boots, which I believe are still preserved as relics in Shropshire, and have been immortalised in a song, of which the following stanza may be taken as a specimen:—

'These boots were Tom Moody's, a better ne'er strode
A hunter or hack in the field, or the road,
None more true to his friend or his bottle when full—
In short, you may call him a thorough John Bull.'

But *the* song which has served to keep Tom Moody's memory green through all these years is the following well-known ditty of Charles Dibdin's.

TOM MOODY

BY CHARLES DIBDIN

YOU all knew Tom Moody, the whipper-in, well,
The bell that's done tolling was honest Tom's knell;
A more able sportsman ne'er followed a hound
Through a country well known to him fifty miles round.
No hound ever open'd with Tom near a wood,
But he'd challenge the tone, and could tell if 't were good;
And all with attention would eagerly mark,
When he cheer'd up the pack, hark! to Rockwood, hark! hark!
Hie! wind up! and cross him! Now, Rattler, boy! hark!

Six crafty earth-stoppers, in hunters' green drest,
Supported poor Tom to an earth made for rest.
His horse, which he styled his 'Old Soul,' next appear'd,
On whose forehead the brush of his last fox was rear'd:
Whip, cap, boots, and spurs, in a trophy were bound,
And here and there followed an old straggling hound.
Ah! no more at his voice yonder vales will they trace!
Nor the welkin resound with his burst in the chase!
With 'Hie over! Now press him! Tally-ho! Tally-ho!'

Thus Tom spoke his friends ere he gave up his breath:
'Since I see you're resolved to be in at the death,
One favour bestow—'tis the last I shall crave—
Give a rattling view-halloo thrice over my grave,
And unless at that warning I lift up my head,
My boys, you may fairly conclude I am dead!'
Honest Tom was obeyed, and the shout rent the sky,
For every one joined in the tally-ho cry!
Tally-ho! Hark forward! Tally-ho! Tally-ho!

When the song was sung by Charles Incledon, the famous Cornish tenor, at Drury Lane, it was rapturously encored and became immediately popular. A party of Shropshire fox-hunters, who had met Dibdin at Willey Hall, went up to London on purpose to hear this elegy on their departed whipper-in. They gathered in the pit, but the tally-ho chorus, as rendered by Incledon, did not at all satisfy their critical tastes, so they made their way in a body on the stage, and there, to the amusement and delight of the audience, in their top-boots and scarlet coats, gave the view-halloo with the proper volume of sound, and showed the startled Londoners what Shropshire lungs could do.

Squire Forester survived his old servant by fifteen years. He had been elected member for Wenlock in 1757, and held the seat for thirty years, always voting straight and saying what he had to say in the House in a blunt, forcible, straightforward way, that left no mistake as to his meaning. At the time of the Invasion Panic the squire and his fox-hunting friends raised The Wenlock Loyal Volunteers, a corps of which he was Major, and on which he spent much time and money. There was open house at Willey Hall for these gallant scarlet-coated defenders of their country, and the old place rang day and night to the clash of arms, the tramp of recruits at drill, and the martial music of the regimental band. In that dire time of storm and stress the squire's purse was ever open to relieve the destitute. He bought up all the provisions he could lay his hands upon, and fed half the countryside for months, when starvation stared the nation in the face. Deep and sincere was the grief all over Shropshire when the great-hearted Squire of Willey Hall breathed his last on the 13th of July 1811, at the age of seventy-three. His will was characteristic of him, as the following extracts will show :—

'I desire that my body may be interred in a grave near the Communion Table in the Parish Church of Willey, in a plain and decent manner. And it is my will that eight of my servants or workmen be employed as bearers of my body to the grave, to each of whom

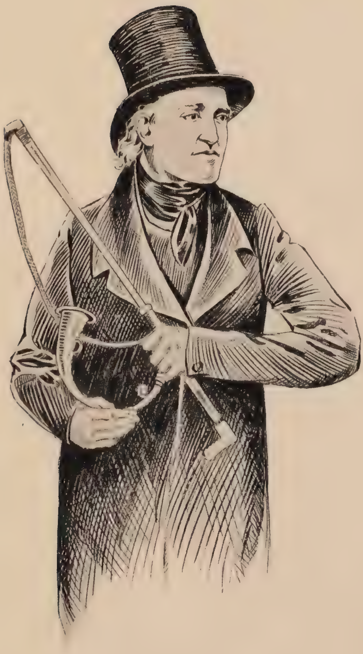
I bequeath the sum of one guinea. And I do hereby direct that my old chestnut horse, commonly called the Aldenham horse, shall be shot as soon as conveniently may be after my decease, by two persons, one of whom to fire first, and the other to wait in reserve and fire immediately afterwards, so that he may be put to death as expeditiously as possible; and I direct that he shall afterwards be buried with his hide on, and that a flat stone without inscription shall be placed over him. . . . I request that my body may be carried to its burial place in the dusk of the evening.'

So, on a cloudy summer night, just as the bells were chiming ten, they buried the old fox-hunter by torchlight in the family vault beneath the family pew in the ivy-grown old Norman Church of Willey.

JOHN PEEL.

LIKE Tom Moody, John Peel owes his celebrity to a song, though I am bound to say that the Cumberland huntsman was far more worthy of such a distinction than the Shropshire whipper-in. And what canny Cumbrian is there, the wide world over, whose heart is not stirred within him by the dear, familiar words and tune of 'D'ye ken John Peel,' even as the hearts of his Scottish neighbours across the Border are stirred by 'Auld Lang Syne'! It has been sung in strange places, that famous Cumberland hunting-song. Its chorus rang out hearty and homely from the huts at Balaclava and the dreary trenches before Sebastopol. It cheered the spirits of the band of beleaguered heroes in the Residency at Lucknow. The future King of England, our jolly sport-loving Prince, has been known many a time to join lustily in its spirit-stirring chorus. I myself have heard it sung on the boards of Drury Lane by some seventy comely lasses, whose shapely figures, clad in the hunting costume of the other sex, made one of the prettiest pictures I ever saw upon the stage, and gave an effect to the song which roused the audience to enthusiasm.

And yet, world-famous as the song is, I don't suppose that one person in a thousand knows who wrote it, or has the faintest notion who or what John Peel was beyond



JOHN PEEL.

the fact that he was fond of hunting. Indeed, I have often heard the question asked, whether John Peel was a 'real person' or merely a mythical hero.

Well, that question is easily answered. John Peel *was* a 'real person,' and a remarkably fine specimen of the good old sporting Cumberland yeoman, or 'statesman,' as they call the class up there. The ancient race of yeomen, now fast dying out, almost extinct indeed in many parts of England, was the best breed of Englishmen this island ever nurtured—stout of heart, sturdy of limb, wielders of the terrible English long bow, stubborn sticklers for their rights as freemen, and royal good sportsmen all. Was not the Achilles of our English Iliad, bold Robin Hood, a yeoman, and prouder of his descent than any Norman baron of them all? I know that a foolish attempt has been made to show that Robin was an out-lawed *nobleman*. But in the real, genuine old Robin Hood Ballads, before all the spurious rubbish about Maid Marian was introduced, the hero is always styled *yeoman*, and it is because he was a type of the true English yeoman that he has retained his popularity as our great national ballad hero.

Of this good stock came John Peel of Caldbeck. He was born on the 13th of November 1776, and he lived for the greater part of his life, after he came to manhood, at Uldale, not far from his birthplace, between Brocklebank Fell and the High Pike. A fine stalwart specimen of a Cumbrian dalesman he was, six feet one inch in his stockings, big-limbed and broad-shouldered. His passion for the Chase was born with him, and showed itself from the time he was able to throw his leg across a pony's back. That he was of a bold, independent spirit was proved by his romantic marriage. He had set his affections on a comely young woman named Mary White, the daughter of a farmer at Uldale. He was twenty and she was nineteen, and, without troubling to consult their respective parents, the young couple resolved to get married. There was no secrecy about the affair. John went straight to the parson of Caldbeck, handed in the names of John Peel, bachelor, and Mary White, spinster, both of that parish, and desired that the banns should be read out for the first time the following Sunday.

The announcement that these two persons contemplated being joined together in holy matrimony caused the liveliest astonishment among the congregation. But none were more amazed than the parents of the prospective bride and bridegroom. Up sprang Mary's mother from her seat and promptly forbade the banns, adding in tones of warm indignation, 'They're far ower young.'

So strong was the parental opposition on both sides that there was no 'second time of asking,' and the young lovers apparently acquiesced in the decision of their elders. But, like Brer Fox, they 'lay low,' and, finding that there was no chance of inducing their parents to consent to their early union, they took the law into their own hands.

One night, when the old folks were abed, John went to his father's stables, selected the stoutest and fleetest horse there, 'Binsey,' saddled him with a pillion, mounted and set off for Uldale. At the appointed signal beneath the window, Mary stole out, was swung by John's strong arm into the pillion, and away they rode for Gretna Green. So cleverly was the elopement planned that the old folks at Uldale and Caldbeck had only just realised that the pair had levanted, when John Peel's stentorian view-halloo was heard outside his father's homestead; and, coolly dismounting, he helped Mary from the pillion and formally introduced her to the astonished parents as his wedded wife.

Of course there was a flare-up at both houses. But there was no getting over the fact that the young couple were 'fast-buckled,' and the only thing to be done was to make the best of it. So, the truant lovers were forgiven, and Parson Lynn of Caldbeck was called upon to marry them over again in the parish church, that there might be no mistake about the knot being legally and irrevocably tied.

The saddle and pillion upon which the stout nag Binsey bore the lovers to Gretna Green twain, and brought them back one, are still preserved in the family of John Peel's eldest son, who lived to the patriarchal age of ninety and died but eleven years ago.

Unlike many persons who marry in haste to repent at leisure, John and Mary Peel never had any reason to regret their romantic flight across the Border. Their union was a happy one, and John became the proud father of thirteen children, the eldest of whom, a boy was a thorough chip of the old block and as keen a sportsman as his sire.

I have described John Peel as a huntsman, but he was really far more than that. For, though not what you could call a Master of Hounds, he for fifty-five years kept, solely at his own expense, a pack, usually of twelve couples, which he hunted and whipped-in himself, till his son, young John, was old enough to act as his whipper-in. The pack was a mongrel one of all sorts and sizes, but the hounds were rare good ones for work, though that work would have made the hair of a Master of the Quorn stand on end with horror. For, John boasted that they would hunt anything from a rabbit to a sheep. They had some of their best sport with hares. As for the fox, he was regarded by these sporting dalesmen as vermin to be hunted down and slain without mercy. Reynard played too much havoc with the young lambs to be allowed any of the honours and privileges now assigned him. When there was a fox-hunt on, the dalesmen assembled mostly on foot, for their quarry was pretty safe to lead them where horses could not follow, and John Peel's nondescript pack was reinforced by every kind of dog in the neighbourhood,

> 'Mongrel, puppy, whelp and hound,
> And cur of low degree.'

His own knowledge of the country for miles around was extraordinarily minute and accurate, and when a fox was started he was seldom at fault as to the line it would pursue.

Among John Peel's many sporting friends was one John Woodcock Graves, a native of Wigton, who, as a lad, had hunted with the hounds of Joseph Steel of Cockermouth, a noted sportsman. When he was about in mid-manhood Graves came to Caldbeck and started a woollen mill there. Being still a keen sportsman, he speedily made the acquaintance of John Peel, with whom he had many a good day's hunting. Graves was an extraordinary walker, and it was said that there was not a horse in the dales that he could not tire out. His admiration for his friend Peel as a sportsman was enthusiastic. He was, amongst his many accomplishments, a bit of an artist, and painted a portrait of John which is still preserved in the family. As a likeness it is said to be excellent, but the execution is faulty and betrays the hand of the crude amateur. But what John Woodcock Graves could not do with his pencil he has done with his pen. He has immortalised the mighty hunter of Cumberland in the famous song which one may safely prophesy will live as long as the English language.

The author of 'D'ye ken John Peel,' gives the following account of its composition :—

'Nearly forty years have passed since John Peel and I sat in a snug parlour at Caldbeck among the Cumbrian mountains. We were then both in the heyday of manhood, and hunters of the older fashion, meeting the night before to arrange the earth-stopping, and in the morning to take the best part of the hunt, the drag over the mountains in the mist, while fashionable hunters lay still in their blankets. Large flakes of snow fell that evening. We sat by the fireside, hunting over again many a good run, and recalling the feats of each particular hound, or narrow, break-neck escapes, when a flaxen-haired daughter of mine came in, saying, "Father, what do you say to what Grannie sings?" Grannie was singing to sleep my eldest son—now a leading barrister in Hobart town—with an old rant called 'Bonnie Annie.' The pen and ink for hunting appointments being on the table, the idea of writing a song to the old air forced itself upon me, and thus was produced, impromptu, 'D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so grey?' Immediately after, I sang it to poor Peel, who smiled through a stream of tears that fell down his manly cheeks: and I well remember saying to him in a joking style, "By Jove, Peel, you'll be sung when we're both run to earth!"'

Seldom has a prophecy been more remarkably fulfilled. The grand rolling rhythm of the words, set, as they have been, to fine swinging music by Metcalfe, has gained the song an extraordinary popularity—far beyond its merits as a literary composition. The original manuscript, in the Cumbrian dialect, is now in the possession of Mr Iredale of Dalston, near Carlisle, and the following is a correct transcript of the song as rendered subsequently by the author into common English :—

D'YE KEN JOHN PEEL?

D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so grey?
D'ye ken John Peel at the break of the day?
D'ye ken John Peel when he's far, far away,
With his hounds and his horn in the morning?
'Twas the sound of his horn call'd me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds has me oft-times led;
For Peel's view-halloo would waken the dead,
Or a fox from his lair in the morning.

D'ye ken that bitch whose tongue is death?
D'ye ken her sons of peerless faith?
D'ye ken that a fox with his last breath
Curs'd them all as he died in the morning?
(*Chorus*) 'Twas the sound of his horn, &c.

Yes, I ken John Peel and auld Ruby, too,
Ranter and Royal and Bellman as true,
From the drag to the chase, from the chase to the view,
From the view to the death in the morning.
'Twas the sound of his horn, &c.

And I've followed John Peel both often and far,
O'er the rasper-fence, and the gate and the bar,
From low Denton-holme up to Scratchmere Scar,
When we vied for the brush in the morning.
'Twas the sound of his horn, &c.

Then, here's to John Peel with my heart and soul,
Come fill—fill to him another strong bowl:
And we'll follow John Peel thro' fair and thro' foul
When we're wak'd by his horn in the morning.
'Twas the sound of his horn, &c.

A few further details of the now-forgotten author of the most popular of hunting songs may not be out of place. John Woodstock Graves has published his reminiscences, and, amongst other incidents in his life, tells the story of his marriage, which, though not as romantic as that of his friend John Peel, is certainly redeemed from commonplaceness by its quaintness.

'I thought,' he says, 'I would marry a neighbour's daughter whom I had known from childhood. I was daily in her father's house. One evening I had stayed late, reading in the parlour. She was sewing; the rest of the family had retired. After asking what o'clock it was, I laid down the paper, and placing my arms on the table, said to her:—

'"Miss Porthouse, I've been thinking some time of putting a question to you."

'"And pray," asked she, "what kind of a question is it? A foolish one, I'll warrant."

'"I've been thinking," said I, "of proposing marriage to you."

'She started, looked me sternly in the face, then, without a single word, snatched up the lighted candle and indignantly stalked away upstairs and slammed the door to.

'However, we were married afterwards, and had eight children.'

Was ever love story told in more bald, prosaic style, and by a man, too, who was a bit of a poet?

Graves emigrated to Tasmania, settled in Hobart town and died there, on the 17th of August 1886, at the great age of ninety-one, two-and-twenty years after the death of the friend whom he has immortalised.

Graves, who was himself a man of some education and culture, has left this estimate of the character of John Peel. 'He was a man of very limited education beyond hunting, but no wile of fox or hare could escape his scrutiny; and business of any shape was utterly neglected, often to a cost far beyond the first loss. An excellent rider, I have seen him once on a moor put up a fresh hare, and ride till he caught her with his whip. You may know that he was six feet or more, and of a form and gait quite surprising, but his head and face were somewhat insignificant. A clever sculptor once told me that he once followed him, admiring him, a whole market day before discovering who he was. He was generous and true-hearted, and indeed a better heart never throbbed in a human breast.'

So devoted was John Peel to the sport he loved that he cared not what sacrifices he made to enable him to meet the expenses which his hounds and his couple of first-rate hunters entailed upon him. Whenever he was a little embarrassed for want of money, he would sell a bit of land to tide him over the difficulty, and in this way his modest patrimony gradually shrank to very small proportions. But, fortunately for him, his wife had property at Ruthwaite settled on herself, and there John Peel passed the latter part of his life, when he was compelled to let the house at Caldbeck.

There is a pretty story to the effect, that when John Peel's embarrassments reached a crucial point, the leading hunting men of Cumberland called a meeting, to which John Peel was invited; that they presented him with a handsome purse, sufficient to pay his debts; and that, before parting, they gathered round the veteran sportsman and sang, 'D'ye ken John Peel,' as it was never sung before or since.

The descendants of John Peel, however, indignantly deny that there is any truth in that story, or in another which represents Sir Wilfrid Lawson and Mr George Moore as presenting him with a testimonial in the shape of a large sum of money, subscribed by his neighbours to relieve his necessities. The Peels assert that their grandsire was never in such pecuniary straits as to need assistance of that sort.

The stalwart old Cumberland 'statesman' kept up his hunting to the last. He was in his seventy-ninth year, apparently hale and vigorous, when he had his last day with hounds. But the end came suddenly and unexpectedly. His daughter, Mrs Calvert, has given the following account of the closing scene of his life :—

'He had been at a hunt on the Bassenthwaite side and came home late. He was on the dun pony, I remember, when he rode to the door. My mother and I were sitting up. He said he did not feel well ; he could take no supper and went to bed. He could not rest, however, and got up again, and was very ill before morning. He grew worse and died in about a week.'

It was on the 13th of November 1854 that the grand old yeoman went 'to the happy hunting-grounds.' His funeral was attended by every sportsman within twenty miles. Such honour had never been paid to any dalesman within living memory. And so, amid unmistakable signs of heartfelt sorrow, they buried John Peel under the shadow of the tall sycamores and yews in the quiet churchyard of Caldbeck. His famous pack of hounds was broken up at his death, and came into possession of 'that prince of mountain sportsmen,' Mr John Crozier of the Riddings, master of the celebrated Blencathra Hunt. Young John Peel, who was for many years his father's whipper-in, being a much lighter weight, was a better horseman than his sire, and must have had a tougher constitution, for he was a hale man to the end of his ninety years' span. Two finer specimens of the stalwart 'statesmen' of the Cumberland dales, or two keener lovers of the Chase than father and son, it would have been hard to find. Long may the sport they loved flourish among the Cumbrian fells, and produce an unending succession of such strong, hardy, fearless, open-air-loving Englishmen as the two John Peels!

HUGO MEYNELL.

AMONG the revered Fathers of Fox-hunting no name stands higher than that of Hugo Meynell, the First Master of the Quorn, whom his admiring friends designated 'The King of Sportsmen,' and 'The Hunting Jupiter.' That these flattering titles were no more than his due, all who knew anything of Hugo Meynell are agreed in admitting. But it is unfortunate that it occurred to none of his admiring contemporaries to preserve any characteristic details of a career so interesting to sportsmen. The Meynell of tradition looms dimly through the twilight of the past, a vague, shadowy figure, of giant proportions indeed, but as indistinct in outline as the figure of King Arthur, seen for the last time by Guinevere through the gathering mirk and mist ere he went down

> 'To that great battle in the West.'

But such scanty details of the life of this great master of the science of hunting as I have been able to find scattered among writers who have touched upon his exploits, I have collected here, and have endeavoured to piece out of them something like a record of his career.

The Meynells are an ancient house, claiming descent from the great Norman Baron, Hugo de Grente Mesnil. The title-deeds to their Langley estates date from the twelfth year of Henry II, and the Sir Hugo of Edward the First's time received the Order of the Bath for his conspicuous gallantry at Crecy and Poictiers. Of such good old stock came Hugo Meynell, who was born in the month of June 1735. At the early age of three-and-twenty he was High Sheriff for Derbyshire, a proof of the good position he held in his native county. He was three times elected a Member of Parliament. From 1761 to 1768 he sat as representative of Lichfield; in 1774 he was elected Member for Lymington, and in 1778 he was returned for Staffordshire. In June 1754 he married Anne, daughter of John Gell, Esquire, by whom he had one son, Godfrey, born October 4, 1755. Mrs Meynell died at Hopton in Derbyshire in June 1757, and, exactly a year after her death, Hugo Meynell took to himself a second wife in the person of Anne, daughter of Thomas Boothby Scrimshire, Esquire, of Tooley Park, by whom he had two sons—Hugo, born in 1759, who died in 1780, and Charles, born in 1768, who was subsequently Master of the Royal Tennis Court. These bald facts are all that is now known of the private life of Hugo Meynell. Even the date of his first appearance in Leicestershire, where for fifty years he reigned as a king of the hunting field, cannot now be ascertained, but it was probably about the year 1754 that he purchased the house at Quorndon, which he transformed into a commodious hunting seat, and which, on the illness of his eldest son, was sold in 1800 to the Earl of Sefton, who succeeded him as Master of the Quorn.

How popular and successful Hugo Meynell was as a Master of Foxhounds may be gathered from the following eulogistic remarks by 'Nimrod' in his *Hunting Tours*.

'In mentioning the name of Mr Meynell,' he writes, 'I feel a degree of respect due to it, which all sportsmen must acknowledge and appreciate. So long as fox-hounds and fox-hunters are to be found in England, it will never be forgotten; neither is there a kennel which is not, at this moment, indebted to him for some of its best blood. As a master of a pack of foxhounds Mr Meynell has never been excelled. Independent of his knowledge of everything relating to hounds and to hunting, his conduct in the field was such as should be handed down as an example worthy the imitation of every Master of Foxhounds. From his rank in life, and from the sphere in which he moved—to say that he was well-bred and polite to his equals, and to his friends, is saying nothing; but towards every man who hunted with his hounds, he conducted himself with that general urbanity and condescension which *alone* secure to a person in his situation the esteem of the country, and, with it, the foxes. In his time, a man's life was not more secure from violence and murder than was that of a fox.

'To every man who is a fox-hunter, it is well known how much it is requisite for a Master of Hounds to stand well with the yeomen and farmers of his country. They have much in their power, and to them Mr Meynell was uniformly civil, and even polite. He has been seen to pull out his watch at the place of meeting, and to observe that the time of throwing off was expired; but he would say, "I see Jack —'s horse is here, and he is not come. It is Leicester fair this morning; he is a good fellow, and we will give him a quarter of an hour." I need not add that he alluded to a sporting grazier, who, he knew, was obliged to attend the fair.

'The last time I saw Mr Meynell in the field was, I believe, nearly the last time of his being with hounds; it was after Lord Sefton had taken them. We met at Thrussington Wolds, a seat of Lord Ferrers, and found directly in the plantations close to the house. We went well away with our fox for about two miles, and thought we were in for a run; but he was met and attacked by a shepherd's dog, which grappled with him; he disengaged himself and went on; but in a few fields more we found him drowned in a canal which he attempted to cross; so that, no doubt, the cur dog had injured him. I observed Mr Meynell very forward in this short but sharp burst, frequently cheering as he went. As we were drawing for a second fox, I witnessed a remarkable instance of the quickness of his ear—more remarkable at his period of life, when that wonderful organ is seldom so correct. The hounds were in a small covert, about a hundred yards from the place where he stood, which commanded a view of it. Lord Sefton went with the hounds and stood close to the gorse. A hound spoke, but he spoke cautiously. There was no cheer to him, so he was suspected; but "one word" (as we say) from a hound in a Leicestershire covert sets every man on the alert for a start. It is like the sound of a bugle to prepare for the charge, and, on some nerves, has much the same effect. However, in this case, the alarm was false, and Lord Sefton rode up to Mr Meynell, and asked him what hound spoke in the covert. "I think it was Concord," said Mr Meynell. "It was *not* Concord," said Lord Sefton. "He was at my horse's heels." "It was either Concord or Caroline" (brother and sister, and their first year), replied Mr Meynell. In five minutes the point was decided.

Raven, the huntsman, came by with the hounds. Lord Sefton asked him the question. "Concord, my lord," was the reply.

'Mr Meynell's eye to a hound was not less quick than his ear. It has been asserted that on seeing a pack of strange hounds drawn to feed, he could call almost all of them afterwards by their names.'

Mr R. C. Vyner in his admirable work *Notitia Venatica* gives an exhaustive analysis of what he calls the *Meynellian Science*, or *Fox-hunting upon System*, from which I will make the following extracts :—

'It was at the commencement of the career of the "great Meynell," that the dawn of science began to cast its rays upon that system, out of which has grown the modern style of fox-hunting ; he was, without doubt, the most successful Master of Hounds in his time, producing the steadiest, wisest, best, and handsomest pack of foxhounds in the kingdom. His object in breeding hounds was to combine strength with beauty, and steadiness with high mettle. His idea of perfection of shape was short backs, open bosoms, straight legs, compact feet, as the greatest and first consideration in form ; the first qualities he considered were fine noses and stout runners. In the spring of the year, he broke in his hounds at hare, to find out their propensities, which, when at all flagrant, they early discovered, and he drafted them according to their defects ; after hare-hunting they were, during the remaining part of the summer, walked daily amongst riot. When the hunting season commenced, his hounds were hunted in the woodlands, amidst abundance of foxes, for two months. In the month of November the pack were carefully divided into the Old and Young Pack. The Old Pack consisted of three-year-olds and upwards, and no two-year-olds were admitted, except a very high opinion was entertained of their virtues and abilities. The young hounds were hunted twice a week, as much in woodlands as possible, and in the most unpopular coverts; the Young Pack had always a few couples of steady old hounds with them. The Old Pack hunted the best country; when any bad faults were discovered, they were immediately drafted for fear of contamination. Skirting, overrunning the scent, and babbling, were considered the greatest faults; perfections consisted of true guiders in hard running, and close, patient hunters on a cold scent, together with stoutness.

'Mr Meynell prided himself on the steadiness and docility of his hounds, and their hunting through sheep and hares, which they did in a most surprising manner. He seldom or never attempted to lift his hounds through sheep, and from habit, and the great flocks the hounds were accustomed to, they carried the scent on most correctly and expeditiously, much sooner than any lifting could have accomplished. Mr Meynell was not fond of casting hounds; when once they were laid on to the line of scent, he left it to them; he only encouraged them to take pains; and kept aloof, so that the steam of the horses could not interfere with the scent.

'When a fox dwells in covert and will not go away, the best plan is to leave him, and not kill him—another day he will, perhaps, afford good sport. Blood was a thing Mr Meynell was more indifferent about than most owners of hounds. Murdering foxes is a most absurd prodigality. Seasoned foxes are as necessary to sport as experienced hounds.

'Mr Meynell's hounds had more good runs than any other pack of his day. Two very extraordinary ones happened, of a very rare description; one was a run of one hour and twenty minutes without a check, and they killed their fox; the other was two hours and fifty minutes without a cast, and killed. The hounds in the first run kept well together, and only two horses performed it. The other run was performed by the whole of the pack, and though all were up at the death two or three slackened their pace just at the last. One horse only went the whole of it. Mr Meynell's natural taste led him to admire large hounds, but his experience convinced him that small ones were generally the stoutest, soundest, and in every respect the most executive.'

There you have a fair *résumé* of the system or science which has made the name of Hugo Meynell famous in the annals of fox-hunting. Mr Delmè Radcliffe, himself a brilliant ornament of the Chase, has tried hard to unearth some anecdotes of the great master which might enable posterity to form some idea of his character as a man. But despite the fact that Mr Delmè Radcliffe had the advantage of personal intercourse with Mr Charles Loraine Smith, an intimate friend of Hugo Meynell's, and had all the assistance the members of the Meynell family could afford him, his success has been but small. Here, however, are some of the most interesting facts which he has collected about his hero:—

'Mr Meynell had at no time more than three or four subscribers to his hounds, and at first only two—Lord R. Cavendish and Mr Boothby, brother to the lady who became Mr Meynell's second wife. With Mr Boothby, nicknamed 'Prince,' he lived for some time at Langton Hall; and the hounds, in those days, were kept at Great Bowden Inn, a most convenient place for the Langton and Harborough countries. Mr Meynell considered horses merely as vehicles to the hounds — in which his heart and soul were centred—in the field; but he well knew the necessity of having beneath him the means of being with them on all occasions; and even in those days, when 300 guineas was considered as an ultra price for a hunter, he did not hesitate to possess himself of South, a little horse barely exceeding fifteen hands in height; but he afterwards sold South to Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh for 500 guineas. There are different opinions as to Mr Meynell's proficiency as an elegant horseman; but it was never disputed that his progress over a country was, like the whole course of his life, straightforward.

'Some of his best horses in 1792 were Miller; Tom-Tit; Harry Punt—died after a hard day at Widmerpool, March 21, 1795; Leveller Joe; a chestnut mare; Mr Fitzherbert's horse. He had also a particularly clever hack mare, which he rode to covert, and which was ridden also by the late Marchioness of Salisbury. This mare was the occasion of the invention of the spring-bar. The groom-boy who rode her on one occasion having placed his feet in the stirrup leathers, and been kicked off, was dragged by the leg and killed. Debrew, Mr Meynell's valet and *maitre d'hôtel* (and probably, as his name would indicate, butler also), a very ingenious and clever man, set his wits to work to prevent the recurrence of a like catastrophe. The spring-bar was the fruit of his invention. To him also was to be imputed the merit of a spring in a wooden leg, worn by Tom Jones, the second whipper-in. This Tom Jones, if of less notoriety than his namesake, the hero of Fielding was probably more distinguished and distinguishable in the field. He was a capital horseman, and very active in the saddle. The wooden leg, so far from being any inconvenience to him, appeared rather useful than otherwise, in creeping by trees, gate-posts, etc., whenever he could contrive to keep this succedaneum nearest to the obstruction. Jack Raven was huntsman; Skinner and Jones whipped in; and subsequently Joe Harrison.

'Mr Meynell was somewhat particular in his diet, as every one should be who cares for the preservation of those capabilities for bodily exercise,

> " . . . Whose use
> Depends so much upon the gastric juice."

'He endeavoured to take the greatest amount of nourishment in the smallest possible compass. His usual hunting breakfast consisted of as much as a small tea-cup would contain of a pound of veal, condensed to that quantity. His pocket was always fortified with a small bottle of stimulus, similar to that carried in the present day; but instead of eau-de-vie, curaçoa, or cherry bounce, it contained a far better stomachic, in the shape of *veritable tincture of rhubarb*, to the use of which he was much addicted.'

The number of foxes killed during the last ten years of Mr Meynell's mastership varied from twenty-seven to forty-six brace, but it must be borne in mind that they then hunted only three days per week throughout the season, and it was very rarely that master or servants were provided with more than one horse per day.

Mr W. C. A. Blew, the able editor of the latest edition of Mr Delmè Radcliffe's invaluable work, supplies the following interesting note apropos of second horses:—

'Lord Sefton, who succeeded Mr Meynell, is generally credited with having introduced the custom of bringing second horses into the field; but this seems to be a mistake. We read that Henry VIII once tired out eight horses in a day while hunting; and in an account of a run with the Charlton (afterwards Goodwood) Hounds, which took place Friday, 26th January 1738 (see paper in Volume XV, *Sussex Archæological Collection*, p. 74) we learn that 'Lord Harcourt blew his *first* horse and subsequently his *second* felt the effects of long legs and a sudden steep.' And 'in Goodwood Park, the Duke of Richmond chose to send three lame horses back to Charlton, and took Saucy Face, and Sir William, which happened to be at Goodwood.'

It was in Hugo Meynell's day that hard riding to hounds first came into vogue. Mr Childe of Kinlet Hall, Shropshire, a sportsman of the highest order and a great personal friend of Mr Meynell's, is said to have first set the example, and it was quickly followed by the leading members of the Quorn, much to the disgust of sportsmen of the old school, who complained, not without reason, that this dashing style of riding, however agreeable to the well-mounted and daring horseman, was a drawback to the real enjoyment of the sport, and frequently resulted in the loss of foxes. But the hard riders had their way, and unquestionably the fashion gave more zest to the *sport* if it militated somewhat against the *science* of hunting.

The names of all the then noted hard riders with the Quorn have fortunately been preserved to us in the poem which celebrates the greatest event in the annals of that Hunt, the famous Billesdon Coplow run, which took place on the 24th of February 1800, the last season of

Hugo Meynell's mastership. Several rival bards have commemorated that marvellous run in verse, but the best-known and most meritorious of these effusions is that by the Rev. Robert Lowth, son of the eminent bishop best remembered now by his translation of Isaiah. They found in Billesdon Coplow covert, and thence ran their fox to Skeffington Earths, past Tilton Woods, by Tugby and Whetstone, where the field, or as many of them as could manage it, crossed the River Soar. At this point the hounds, changing their fox, carried a head to Enderby Gorse, where they lost him after a chase of two hours and fifteen minutes, the distance being twenty-eight miles. The Rev. Robert Lowth was one of the field, and wrote the poem at the request of the Honourable George Germaine, brother of Lord Sackville, afterwards Duke of Dorset. The poem is too long to quote in full, but the following lines are a just tribute to the excellence of Meynell's hounds:

'Thus ended a chase which for distance and speed
  Its fellow we never have heard of or read.
In most other countries they boast of their breed
  For carrying at times such a beautiful head;
But these hounds to carry a head cannot fail,
And constantly too, for, by George! there's no tail.
Talk of horses and hounds and the system of kennel,
Give me Leicestershire nags and the hounds of Old Meynell!'

Meynell's death took place on the 14th of December 1808, in his 74th year. He died, as John Warde did, at his London house in Chapel Street, Mayfair, and was buried in the old family vault at Bradley, in Derbyshire, the manor of which had been purchased by his ancestor, Alderman Francis Meynell, a rich banker, and sometime Sheriff of the City of London, who died in 1666. The estates, worth £11,000 a year, went to his son Charles, who, on his marriage to the Hon. Elizabeth Ingram, daughter of Viscount Irwin, added the name of Ingram to his own.

Hugo Meynell seems to have been the model of a Master of Hounds, and a perfect English gentleman. 'He was indeed' says one of his friends, 'as much at home at St James's as he was at Quorndon or at Ashby Pastures.' Though he did not own an acre of land in Leicestershire, he found his way at once to the hearts of the sportsmen of that fastidious country, which he was the first to render famous among the hunting countries of the three kingdoms. 'He was doubtless,' says 'Nimrod,' 'the most successful sportsman of his time, nor has he been surpassed by any who have trodden in his steps. . . . He was a man of strong and vigorous mind, joined with much perseverance as well as ardour in his favourite pursuit, and bringing faculties to bear upon sport as a *science* which would have distinguished themselves in any walk of life to which he might have applied them.'

There are some ignorant persons who take it for granted that a man who devotes his life to sport must be a creature of low intelligence. The characters of such men as Peter Beckford, Assheton Smith, and Hugo Meynell give the lie direct to that ridiculous notion, and prove conclusively, if proof were needed, that to the composition of a first-rate sportsman there is necessary no mean quantity of—what Etty said he mixed his colours with—*brains*.

Yarborough.

THE EARLS OF YARBOROUGH.

AMONG the great aristocratic houses who, by their influence and wealth, have contributed enormously to the maintenance and development of the sport of fox-hunting in England, the Earls and Barons of Yarborough take a very high place. Claiming lineal descent from the Pelhams, who are said to have held a lordship of that name in Herefordshire before the Conquest, the Earls of Yarborough are a younger branch of the Sussex Pelhams whose present representative head is the Earl of Chichester. The first of these Sussex Pelhams of whom there is any authentic record was Sir William Pelham of Loughton, in that shire, whose chief distinction, as far as I can discover, is that he was the father of a famous son. The second Sir William was but a younger son, with neither interest nor patrimony, and was left therefore to carve out fame and fortune for himself by his own good sword. Adopting the profession of arms, he proved himself a brilliant soldier on many a hard-fought field in the Low Countries, France, Scotland, and Ireland. But, besides a stout heart and a strong hand, he was gifted with a shrewd brain which made him as valuable in the council-chamber as in the camp. Queen Bess thought so highly of his capacity, both as warrior and administrator, that she appointed him Chief Justiciar of Ireland in 1579.

But when the Earl of Leicester was despatched to the Low Countries in 1585 to assist the Dutch in their gallant struggle against Philip of Spain, Sir William Pelham relinquished civil for military duties, and met his death as a soldier should at Flushing in 1587.

The son of this valiant knight was slain fighting for the king at Newark, when Rupert's thundering charge broke the Roundheads and scattered them like chaff. The grandson of the Elizabethan Pelhams settled at Brocklesby in Lincolnshire, which has been the seat of this branch of the family ever since.

In the year 1708, Mary, eldest daughter of Charles Pelham of Brocklesby, married Francis Anderson of Manby, the descendant of Sir Thomas Anderson, who came from Scotland in the sixteenth century and rose to be Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. When Charles Pelham died in 1763, at the age of eighty-four, without issue, he bequeathed his Brocklesby estates to his great-nephew, Charles Anderson, son of the aforesaid Mary and Francis, who took the name of Pelham. In 1794, Charles Anderson Pelham was created first Baron Yarborough of Yarborough in the county of Lincoln, and with him commenced the history of the famous Brocklesby Hunt.

This historic pack, however, can trace its origin back much further than the time of the first Lord Yarborough, and the following particulars of its foundation I have culled from Mr R. T. Vyner's *Notitia Venatica* and other sources.

Somewhere about 1590, the Tyrwhitt family possessed the lordship of Kettleby, and lived in a hall surrounded by a moat with fortified drawbridge, near Bigby, on the high road from Brigg to Caistor. In 1799 some remains of the hall were still standing. The Tyrwhitts, in the time of Edward II, intermarried with the Skipwiths. Close by Bigby, at Melton Ross, lived the Ross family, who, in the year 1603, meeting the Tyrwhitts, with whom they had a feud, out on a hunting party, an affray ensued, in which many were slain on both sides. James I, on his progress from Scotland, hearing of the transaction, set up a gallows near the spot, and threatened to hang the first, gentle or simple, who dared to appeal to arms without royal authority. So the frays were put down, but the Skipwiths continue hunting on the wolds of Lincolnshire to this day. The Tyrwhitts, who have taken the name of Drake, are to be found hunting, too, in Oxfordshire, and still retain an estate within a ride of their ancient lordship.

As you ride by the road from Brocklesby to Great Grimsby, you will pass through Aylesby, at the foot of the wolds, a parish with one church and comprising two farms only. One of these, occupied by William Torr, of shorthorn and Leicester sheep celebrity, has outhouses, very recently called 'the Kennels,' although long used as stables, where, a hundred and fifty years ago, Sir Thomas Tyrwhitt kept a pack of hounds. Now, it is in connection with the Tyrwhitts that we first find the name of Pelham cropping up in the annals of the Chase. There is still extant the following memorandum, dated April 30, 1713: 'It is agreed between Sir John Tyrwhitt of Stanfield, Robert Vyner, Esquire, and Charles Pelham, Esquire, that the foxhounds now kept by the said Mr Pelham shall be joined in one pack, and each of them, the said Sir John Tyrwhitt, Robert Vyner, and Charles Pelham, to have an equal share and interest in the said hounds.' The curious and complicated agreement then goes on to specify certain months in the year during which the respective parties are to keep at their proper costs and charges, sixteen couples of hounds, the huntsman, a boy and three horses. The agreement was to stand for five years. Two things are noteworthy about this document. In the first place, the hounds are definitely styled 'foxhounds,' a proof that fox-hunting was regarded as a special branch of the Chase, and apparently ranked above hare-hunting in the Brocklesby country, which certainly was not the case in any other part of England at that time, or for long afterwards. In the second place, we have here the first mention, so far as I am aware, of the number of hounds, horses and servants in a hunting establishment of the period. It is a modest total, no doubt,—not sufficient, one would think, for more than one day's hunting a week. But then, as I have shown elsewhere, foxes were very scarce in those times, for there was no attempt made to preserve them. What happened after the expiration of the five years named in the agreement there is no record to show. But the manuscript list of hounds in the archives of Brocklesby, which date back to 1746, prove that at that time, at any rate, the hounds were in the sole possession of the Mr Charles Pelham named in the memorandum, who, as I have already stated, died in 1763, at the age of eighty-four. There is probably, therefore, truth in the tradition which assigns to the house of Pelham the uninterrupted mastership of the Brocklesby for a hundred and sixty years.

And scarcely less remarkable than the uninterrupted reign of the Pelhams as Masters has been that of the Smiths as huntsmen of the Brocklesby. The first of them was Thomas Smith, whose tenure of office was coeval with the confederacy of 1713, established by the agreement I have quoted. He was noted as the hardest rider in the hunt when he had passed his seventy-second year. To him succeeded his son Thomas, whom the old man entered as whip at the age of fifteen, and who for fifty-nine years carried the horn, to be succeeded in his turn by his son, grandson, and great-grandson, all Williams, who have kept up the succession without a break (if I am not mistaken) till the present day.

In the year 1816 the first Lord Yarborough gave up the management of his hounds to his son, the Honourable Charles Anderson Pelham, and he requested William Smith to resign the horn to *his* son. The old huntsman complied with the request, and Lord Yarborough not only pensioned off his faithful servant on full pay for life, but presented him with a handsome silver cup bearing this inscription: 'The gift of Lord Yarborough to his huntsman, Mr Thomas Smith, after having been more than fifty years in his service: made as an acknowledgment of that indefatigable and unremitting attention to the business of his vocation which may be recommended for a pattern to those who succeed him, and can never be surpassed.'

Between them the first Lord Yarborough and his huntsman had raised the Brocklesby pack to a high state of excellence. The minute attention which they paid to breeding laid the foundation of that reputation which the Brocklesby blood has justly obtained for symmetry, stoutness, courage, speed and exquisite scenting powers. 'The nose of Yarborough' was celebrated before this century had dawned, and the famous Brocklesby 'Ranter' had such a name for stoutness that the great

Meynell, and all the best masters of the day, sought eagerly for a strain of his blood.

In the time of the first Lord Yarborough, the Brocklesby country extended over the whole of the South Wold, part of the Burton, and part of the North Notts countries, and his lordship used to go down into each of these districts for a month at a time to hunt the woodlands. He used to say that when he began hunting there were only three or four fences between Horncastle and Brigg, a distance of thirty miles. They met generally at daybreak, 'dragging up to their fox by following the line of his night foraging rambles to where he lay down to digest his prey.'

The son of the first Lord Yarborough was a more distinguished man than his father, alike in the world of politics and of sport. A Fellow of the Royal Society, a Fellow of the Society of Arts, an honorary D.C.L. of Oxford, for twenty years Member of Parliament for Lincolnshire, Commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron, and Master of the Brocklesby—here was a variety of honours and dignities for the shoulders of one man to bear! And it was, perhaps, to enable him to bear them more philosophically that Lord Melbourne raised him from a baron to an earl in 1837. His reign over the Brocklesby, with William Smith the First as his huntsman, began, as I have told, in 1816, when the old master and the old huntsman resigned in favour of their respective sons. The new blood thus infused into the management worked wonders in the Brocklesby kennels. In 1839 the important mandate went forth that for the future the size of the largest hound on the benches was not to exceed twenty-three inches, and that standard has been ever since maintained. The taste for big hounds had just begun to wane, and it received its death-blow on the day that order was issued to the celebrated kennels of Brocklesby. The earl was gifted with an intuitive knowledge of the science of breeding. He never seemed to make a mistake; the fame of the Brocklesby hounds rose under him to its zenith, and he had a rare coadjutor in William Smith. That famous huntsman, however, was guilty of some eccentricities which might well make the hair of the orthodox 'to stand on end, like quills upon the fretful porcupine.' He was known once to turn out some of his hounds clipped, and on another occasion took out a pack of bitches all 'in season.' But, for all that, he was second to none in England in knowledge of his business. It is written of him that 'he was an excellent servant in the field and the kennel. Well did he know how to breed, feed, and hunt a pack of hounds. He was a person highly educated, and a gentleman in manners, a good horseman, universally liked, rode well, and was followed for years by the finest tenantry in England, all horsemen, all fox-preservers, all good fellows.'

The manner of William Smith's death was tragic. On the 11th of April 1845, he was hunting near Barnoldby le Beck. 'The hounds had checked, and Ranter hit the scent. Will Smith in the act of cheering him, coming to a small fence with a trifling ditch on the off-side, riding carelessly at it, his horse put his foot into the ditch, and fell, pitching him on his head and injuring his spine. He was conveyed to the house of Mr Richard Naiseby, at Barnold le Beck, under whose friendly roof he expired four days after the event.' An obelisk was erected to his memory on the spot where he fell, and inscribed thereon is a long epitaph in verse from the pen of Sir Charles Anderson.

His son William, who was at the time of his father's death huntsman to the East Kent, returned to Brocklesby to take up the horn which had been carried for more than one hundred and thirty years by members of his family.

The earl died at the age of sixty-five on board his yacht *Kestrel*, in Vigo Bay, on the 7th of January 1862. That he was as popular among yachting men as in the hunting-field may be gathered from the following lines by Lord Winchilsea, who, under the pseudonym of 'John Davis,' was then recognised as the laureate of sport.

'When Death pulled old Yarborough down by the stern
And the *Kestrel* returned with the Commodore's urn,
There was weeping at Cowes, lamentation at Ryde,
For the jolly old tar was the whole ocean's pride.'

The second Earl of Yarborough, who was seven-and-twenty when he succeeded to the title, worthily maintained the traditions of his sire and grandsire. The Brocklesby establishment was kept up with undiminished splendour, and the blood of its kennel-sires was as eagerly sought for as in the days of old Ranter the First. Despite the fact that he suffered from chronic ill-health, the second earl devoted himself heart and soul to furthering the interests and the amusement of his tenantry. And this said tenantry is without doubt the most striking feature of the Brocklesby country. When Doctor Buckland, afterwards Dean of Westminster and father of the well-known naturalist Frank Buckland, paid a visit to Brocklesby in the time of the first earl, he said to his host, 'Your tenants are of high character; where do you get them from?' To which Lord Yarborough proudly replied, 'I don't get them, I breed them.' Most of them have been on the estate since the Pelhams first acquired it; some of them date their holdings from even before that time. Hence that loyal feeling between landlord and tenant, which exists in a degree unequalled in any other domain in England.

In illustration of the good feeling prevailing between Lord Yarborough and the farmers on his estates, Mr Delmè Radcliffe gives the following anecdote:—

'I am informed on the indisputable authority of an intimate friend, who was well acquainted with the late Lord Yarborough, that his lordship was in the constant habit of making compensation to all the farmers of the country over which he hunted, who could lay claim for any injury done to their crops. After a very wet season, he sent for one farmer in particular, the proprietor of a field by the side of a favourite covert, to which, owing to the scarcity of foxes in other parts of the hunt, they had been obliged to have constant recourse. At the end of the season this field was literally destroyed, to all appearance—not a vestige of a blade of wheat being visible, and the soil resembling that of a muddy lane. "I have sent for you," said Lord Yarborough to the farmer, "to offer you the fair value of the wheat field, which was so trampled upon last season that I fear you must have been wholly disappointed of your harvest." "On no account, my lord," replied this true specimen of an English farmer, "upon no account can I consent to take a farthing of remuneration. So far from the disappointment, for which I was prepared, never in any previous year have I had so good a crop as has been reaped this harvest in that very field, which at the close of the hunting season looked truly unpromising enough." I am afraid Mr Delmè Radcliffe lips, I could not have believed it possible. They are a race not easily to be turned from their purpose, these same Lincolnshire farmers, and I verily believe that such a hard-riding lot of men is to be found in no country in the world as they are, for, although the Melton men go as hard as it is possible to go, it must be remembered that they are generally on the picked hunters of the world—the most clever, and the best horses that money can buy—whereas a great portion of the Lincolnshire farmers are on raw young horses learning their business, and requiring plenty of pluck and horsemanship to make them hold their place in a run without coming on their heads and rolling their riders in the mud. In no country is the practice so universal of *making* horses as in Lincolnshire, especially this side of it; and there is scarcely a farmer to be found who has not two or three promising young horses in his stable, that will, as their education becomes complete, be passed on, and their places supplied by more young ones.'

The following extraordinary incident, recounted by Mr Fitt, is worth preserving.

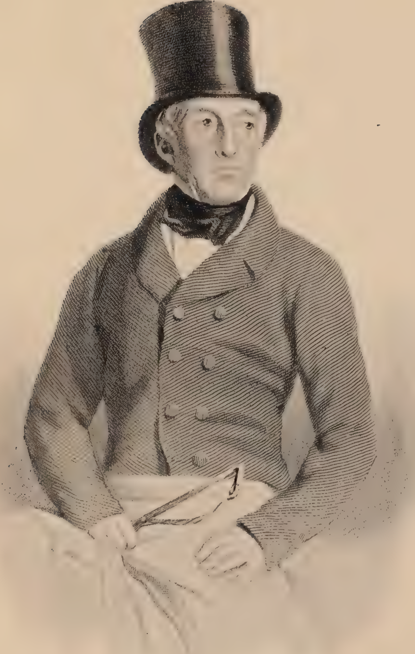
'I once, when hunting with these hounds, saw a very curious thing happen. We were in some large woods, of which I now forget the name, and found a ringing fox, which refused to leave the covert, or at most would go a field or two and return; the second whip, on one of these occasions, hit at him with his whip to turn him, when the lash twisted round his neck, and he was tossed in the air and literally hanged, and the hounds, being close on his brush, caught him almost as he came down.'

The second Earl of Yarborough died in 1875, and was succeeded by his son, Charles Alfred Worsley Anderson Pelham, who, inheriting the sportsmanlike qualities of his ancestors, still hunts, in a style worthy of its best traditions, the oldest pack of English foxhounds.

THOMAS ASSHETON SMITH.

WHEN, after the Peace of Amiens in 1802, the subject of my present sketch visited Paris and was presented to the Emperor Napoleon, the latter, who had heard of the Englishman's prowess, saluted him cordially, and turning to his officers, said, 'Voici, messieurs, *le premier chasseur d'Angleterre*.' By common consent the sportsmen of Great Britain have for two generations endorsed Napoleon's estimate of Thomas Assheton Smith, and still hold him to be the greatest hunting man that England has produced. Amongst a nation of fox-hunters to have won such undisputed pre-eminence points to the possession of remarkable qualities, and not merely physical qualities either. What those qualities were may be best ascertained by a brief study of the man's life and character.

Thomas Assheton Smith was a descendant of the old family of Assheton of Ashley Hall, near Bowden in Cheshire. His grandfather, Thomas Assheton, assumed the name of Smith as heir to his uncle, Captain William Smith. His father married the daughter of Mr Watkin Wynn of Voelas, North Wales, and young Thomas, the mighty hunter, was born in Queen Anne Street, Cavendish Square, London, on the 2nd of August 1776.



THOMAS ASSHETON SMITH.

I imagine that, like his friend Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, Thomas Assheton Smith was harshly treated in his early childhood; for he has left it on record that once, in a fit of rage and indignation at some act of injustice, he knelt beneath a yew tree in the churchyard and vowed never to do anything under pressure of violence and compulsion. He was but seven years of age when he made that solemn vow, but he kept it most rigidly to the end of his life.

A few months after this display of a high spirit in revolt he was sent to Eton. The most remarkable event in his life during the eleven years he was at school there was his great fight with Jack Musters, afterwards his lifelong friend. That desperate battle is still spoken of with bated breath among Etonians, and the tradition thereof will never die. Musters was seventeen and Smith eighteen. In strength, courage and skill they were equally matched, both famed for their proficiency in all athletic sports. For an hour and a half they fought with the fierce and dogged fury of two thoroughbred English bull-dogs. Neither had a thought of giving in—each was grimly resolved to go on till he dropped, and both were so fearfully punished that in the last round they could not see one another; yet, blinded and bruised and bleeding though they were, they would have gone on had not their seconds humanely interfered and insisted on their shaking hands. Assheton Smith's nose was broken, and he used in after days to describe himself as the plainest man in England, always adding, 'Jack Musters, the rascal, spoiled all my beauty.' Among the great fights at Eton that between Jack Musters and Tom Assheton Smith holds a high place. It was an Homeric contest, worthy to rank with Arthur Wellesley's famous 'mill' with Bobus Smith and that tragic combat between Fred Wood and Francis Ashley Cooper, elder brother of the late Earl of Shaftesbury, when, after two hours' desperate fighting, young Ashley Cooper was taken senseless from the ring and died the same evening. Conceive what an outburst of indignant public feeling there would be nowadays if a boy were killed in a fight! But both the boys and the parents of Assheton Smith's days were made of sterner stuff than they are now. I am told that boys don't fight nowadays at our great public schools. For their mothers' sakes I am glad that it is so, but I am not perfectly satisfied that the boys themselves are any the better for the abolition of the good old knuckle-fight.

Thomas Assheton Smith, like most English gentlemen of his day, was an accomplished boxer. A sound knowledge of the art of pugilism was then considered a necessary part of every young gentleman's education, and Thomas Assheton Smith found the accomplishment invaluable to him in after life. His biographer, Sir John Eardley Wilmot, to whom I am largely indebted for the materials of this sketch, thus comments upon the fistic prowess of his hero:—

Mr Smith's skill in pugilistic encounters, and his determined courage in standing up, even against superior strength, served him in good stead on various occasions, especially when, as Master of Hounds, he came in contact with 'roughs,' who imagined they might bully him with impunity. Two or three anecdotes may well find a place here.

Orator Hunt was a bold rider, and, like Mr Smith, well able to use his fists. During the Oxford career of the latter, Mr Warde's hounds were once drawing South Grove, when some remark of Mr Hunt's provoked a sneer from Tom Smith. Fierce words ensued on both sides, and they were in the act of dismounting to settle it then and there, when fortunately a fox was hallooed away, an attraction which neither could resist. 'I always regretted this interruption,' said an eyewitness of the scene, 'for depend upon it this fight would have been well worth seeing; although Hunt had the advantage in weight and height, for all that, I would have backed the squire.'

When hunting in Lincolnshire in 1818, Mr Smith was solicited to stand for the borough of Nottingham—an undertaking as hazardous at that time as for a Tory to stand for Westminster against such an idol as Sir F Burdett then was. The very peril, however, was an inducement for Tom Smith to come forward, and a reception such as was to be expected awaited him. The town was placarded with 'No fox-hunting M.P.,' and the electors carried their virulence so far as to dress up a guy with a red coat and a fox's brush appended to it, which they burnt before the hustings. Mr Smith's appearance there was the signal for a most tremendous row; and not a word of his speech, when he came forward to address them, would they hear. There, however, he remained, in defiance of their yells and hooting, till at last with a stentorian voice, heard above the uproar, he cried out, 'Gentlemen, as you refuse to hear the exposition of my political opinions, at least be so good as to listen to these few words. I will fight any man, little or big, directly I leave the hustings, and will have a round with him now for love.' The effect of this *argumentum ad homines* was electric. It had touched a sympathetic cord. Instead of yells and groans there were rounds of cheers; and from that hour to the end of the contest, in which, after a hard struggle, he was beaten, not a single attempt at molestation was offered to him.

On another occasion, when about to enter one of the banking-houses at Leicester, he hitched his horse's bridle over the iron rails in front of the bank. While his master was inside, the horse stood across the street. A coalheaver, coming by with his cart, gave the nag a flanker with his whip, which nearly sent him into the bank window. This brought out the squire. 'Why did you strike my horse?' was the inquiry. 'Because he was in my way,' was the reply. 'Defend yourself,' was the rejoinder; and the coalheaver doffed his smock-frock, while the squire buttoned his coat and turned up his cuffs. At it they went with hearty goodwill. For the first time in his life Tom Smith found he had got his match; for the fellow stood six feet, and weighed fourteen stone. There was no flinching on either side, and they followed one another up and down the street as closely as a loving couple in a country dance. The noise, however, soon brought the constables, and the combatants were separated amidst the cheering of the crowd. 'You will hear of me again,' said Mr Smith to his resolute antagonist, as he mounted his horse and rode quietly away. So they parted, each having had apparently pretty well enough. Mr Smith went out to dine with his friend Edge, to whom, although much punished, and, it is reported, with a beefsteak over his eye, he told the story with great relish. On the following morning the squire's groom was seen inquiring where the coalheaver lived. His residence having been pointed out, the man knocked at the door for some time. At last it was opened by his wife. 'Does the man live here who fought the gentleman by the bank?' inquired the servant. 'He *did* live here, if he is still alive,' replied the poor woman, 'after the terrible beating he got yesterday.' Groans were heard from a bed on which the man was lying, having the fear of an arrest for striking a gentleman before his eyes. 'Mr Smith has sent me to give you this five-pound note, and to tell you that you are the best man that ever stood before him.' 'God bless his honour!' exclaimed the fellow, jumping up from the bed, for he was more frightened than hurt, and being greatly relieved by this unexpected and fortunate turn of events. 'Thank him a thousand times. I dearly *arned* the money, for his blows are like the kick of a horse; but tell him for all that, to show my gratitude, I will fight him again any day for love.' This anecdote speaks well for both. It turned out on inquiry that this man was the champion of the surrounding country and the terror of the neighbourhood. Therefore we may hope that the bruising he met with from a gentleman whom, doubtless, before the mill he held very cheap, did him good.

Many years afterwards, when Mr Smith was upwards of seventy years of age, he evinced the same daring spirit. A rough country fellow threw a stone at one of his hounds, for which the squire struck at him with his hunting whip. 'You dared not strike me if you were off your horse,' said the clodhopper. In a moment the squire had dismounted, and had raised his hands in artistic attitude, upon which the cowardly rascal fairly took to his heels and fled, amidst the jeers and ridicule of his companions. This scene occurred at Chapmansford, before a large field of sportsmen, who never forgot the circumstance.

From Eton, Assheton Smith went up to Christ Church, Oxford. Long before this, when he was but a boy, he had been entered to hounds, and had given unmistakable proof of his skill and daring in the saddle. Indeed, his fame had spread pretty far, as the following anecdote will show. One day his father was at his club in London among a party of sportsmen who were speaking of the splendid horsemanship of Sir Henry Peyton and his son. 'There are no father and son in the kingdom that could beat them,' exclaimed one enthusiast. Whereupon Thomas Assheton Smith, the elder, quietly remarked :—

'I will back a father and son against them for £500.'

'Name! name!' cried half-a-dozen voices.

'*I* am one, and Tom Smith the other,' was the reply. The father, by the way, always spoke of his son as 'Tom Smith.' No one took the bet. At this time, young Tom, besides hunting regularly with the hounds of the famous John Warde in Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire, was distinguishing himself in other branches of sport. He was a fine swimmer, a good oar, and a cricketer of the first rank. Indeed there were few better batsmen in England. He made 86 for Surrey *v.* England, against the best professional and amateur bowling of the day. And in the first Gentlemen *v.* Players match ever played, on July 7, 1806, he scored 48 run out, the Gentlemen winning in a single innings; but it must be borne in mind that they were allowed the services of the crack professionals, Beldham and Lambert, who made 57 and 16 respectively, besides doing deadly execution with the ball. Assheton Smith was also a capital shot; but, though he excelled in nearly every sport, only one really had his heart, and that was fox-hunting. In the memorable Billesdon Coplow run in Leicestershire on the never-to-be-forgotten 24th of February 1800, of which I have given a description elsewhere in these pages, Thomas Assheton Smith was one of the foremost heroes. He bought the horse (Furzecutter), which he rode on that immortal day for £26, and sold him after the run to Lord Clonbrook for £400. 'A pretty good comment,' said Smith, 'on the place I maintained that day.'

In 1806 he succeeded Lord Foley as Master of the Quorn, and hunted that country till 1816, when he gave up the horn to Squire Osbaldeston and took his stud into Lincolnshire, where he was Master of the Burton Hounds for eight years.

'Nimrod' (C. J. Apperley), at that time the leading authority on hunting, thus briefly sums up the characteristics of Assheton Smith as a master whilst he hunted the Quorn:—

'Lord Foley was succeeded in the possession of the Quorn hounds by that most conspicuous sportsman, Thomas Assheton Smith, who kept them eight or nine seasons. As combining the character of a skilful sportsman and desperate horseman, perhaps his parallel is not to be found; and his name will be handed down to posterity as a specimen of enthusiastic zeal in one individual pursuit rarely equalled. Mr Smith did not become a Master of Foxhounds because it was the fashion; neither did he go a-hunting because others went a-hunting; neither did he ride well up to his hounds one day, and loiter a mile behind them the next. No; from the first day of the season to the last he was always the same desperate fellow over a country, and unquestionably possessing, *on every occasion and at every hour of the day*, the most bull-dog-like nerve ever exhibited in the saddle. His motto was, "I'll be with my hounds;" and all those who have seen him in the field must acknowledge he made no vain boast of his prowess. His falls were countless; and no wonder, for he rode at places which *he knew* no horse could leap over; but his object was to get, one way or another, into the field with his hounds. As a horseman, however, he has ever been super-excellent. He sits in his saddle as if he were part of his horse, and his seat displays vast power over his frame. In addition to his power his hand is equal to Chiffney's, and the advantages he derives from it may be gleaned from the following: Being seen one day hunting his hounds on Radical, always a difficult, but at that time a more than commonly difficult, horse to ride, he was asked why he did not put a martingale on him to give him more power over his mouth. His answer was cool and laconic: "Thank ye, but my left hand shall be *my* martingale." Mr Smith was the first gentleman who fulfilled the character of huntsman to his hounds in this far-famed country.'

The stories of 'Tom Smith's' prowess in the saddle are innumerable. He was the most daring and reckless of riders, albeit there was ever a method in his madness, and probably no man ever had so many falls. Here are some anecdotes of the latter:—

'Screwdriver,' says Sir John Eardley Wilmot, 'once fairly dislodged the squire into the middle of a gorse cover. He was finding his fox in some very high gorse, and was sitting loosely on Screwdriver—who, even after Mr Smith took to him, retained his untamable temper—when the wilful animal started aside, kicked violently and flung him over his head. Nothing, owing to the height of the gorse, could be seen of the squire, but Screwdriver kept kicking and plunging in a circle round him. "Let go the bridle, or he will be the death of you," said a nervous, well-meaning farmer. "He shall kick my brains out first," was the reply of the still prostrate sportsman, who was soon up and in the saddle.

'Although his falls were numerous, owing to his never allowing his hounds to get away from him, yet he was very seldom seriously hurt. Only on two occasions had he a bone broken: once at Melton, when he consoled himself by learning arithmetic from the pretty damsel at the post-office, and afterwards when one of his ribs was fractured, owing, as he said, to his having his knife in a breast-pocket.

'His presence of mind, when falling, never deserted him; he always contrived to fall clear of his horse, *and never to let him go.* The bridle-rein which fell as lightly as a zephyr on his horse's neck, was then held as in a vice. In some instances, with some horses whom he knew well, he would ride for a fall, where he knew it was not possible for him to clear a fence. With Jack-o'-Lantern he was often known to venture on this experiment, and he frequently said there was not a field in Leicestershire in which he had not had a fall. "I never see you in the Harborough country," he observed to a gentleman who occasionally hunted with the Quorn. "I don't much like your Harborough country," replied the other, "the fences are so large." "Oh," observed Mr Smith, "there is no place you cannot get over with a fall." To a young supporter of his pack, who was constantly falling and *hurting* himself, he said, "All who profess to ride, should know *how to fall*."'

Dick Christian, one of the hardest riders that ever sat in the saddle, in one of his delightful yarns with the 'Druid' in 'Silk and Scarlet,' pays this tribute to the straight-going of 'Tom Smith.'

'Nothing ever turned Mr Smith. If you had come near the Coplow, I would have shown you that big ravine he jumped—twelve feet perpendicular, blame me if it isn't, and twenty-one across; it has been nearly the same these forty years. They had brought their fox nearly a mile and a half from the Coplow, and he went to ground in the very next field. Mr Smith was riding Guildford, a very hard puller, and go he would. The biggest fence he ever jumped in Leicestershire was a bullock fence and hedge with ditch and back rails, near Rolleston; he was on Jack-o'-Lantern.'

And a still higher tribute to Assheton Smith's horsemanship is contained in the following anecdote related by Mr Davy, whose prowess has been recorded by 'Nimrod,' and of whom Mr Smith said, 'he was the only man of whose riding I was ever jealous.' A large field were assembled at Ashby Pastures, and a fox went away with the pack close at his brush. A long green drive ran parallel with the fields, down which all the horsemen rode save *one*. A high blackthorn hedge screened the hounds from their view, and they were riding for hard life. All at once some horse was heard on the same side as the hounds, rattling over the gates and crashing through the bullfinches at such a pace that Davy and another remarked, 'Some fellow's horse has purled him and run away.' The illusion, however, was soon dispelled by the hounds swinging across the drive, and Tom Smith, on Jack-o'-Lantern, sailing by their side; having beaten every man among them, though they had only to gallop over plain grass, while he had to encounter both gates and fences of the stiffest character. This Davy confessed was one of the greatest triumphs in horsemanship he had ever witnessed.

But perhaps 'Tom Smith's' most extraordinary jump was one which he made when hunting the Burton country in Lincolnshire. In the course of a fast run hounds came to a navigable canal called 'The Fosdyke' over which were two bridges, side by side, but separated by a slight gap, one for carts, the other for pedestrians and equestrians. At one end of these bridges there was a high gate leading into a field adjoining the canal, and along each side of the bridge a low rail to prevent people from falling over. Assheton Smith rode along one of the bridges and found the gate at the end locked. Seeing the gate open at the end of the *parallel* bridge, he put his horse at the rails and jumped across and over the opposite rails on to the other bridge—about as ticklish and dangerous a leap as a man could well take.

He would change from his hack to his hunter without dismounting—vaulting from one to the other almost without rising from the saddle of the horse he quitted; this was a feat requiring great muscular strength and agility, yet he continued it almost to the day of his death. Nature had indeed given him the very *beau ideal* of the physique needed for the great sport to which he devoted himself. His height was five feet ten inches, and in his Leicestershire days he never scaled more than ten stone, though in later life he ran up to eleven stone ten pounds. His frame, though slight was singularly well knit, athletic, and muscular, and he was always in hard condition. He weighed himself every day, and having once settled upon the lowest weight at which he could preserve his spring and activity, he would not let himself exceed it by an ounce.

In the matter of drinking he was always abstemious, but his appetite was tremendous. His breakfast on a hunting morning consisted of a huge dish of hashed mutton, which he bolted at an alarming pace, yet never knew what indigestion meant. A more complete contrast to the breakfast of another mighty hunter, Hugo Meynell, could not well be imagined. Mr Meynell fortified himself for a long day in the saddle by taking a pound of the best veal condensed into as much soup as would fill a small teacup.

On the 29th of October 1827, Tom Smith took to himself a wife, Maria, second daughter of Mr William Webber of Binfield Lodge, Berkshire—and for the next year or two lived at Penton Lodge near Andover. He had given up the duties of Master of Foxhounds, but hunted regularly with the Craven and New Forest.

On the 12th of May 1828, his father died at the age of seventy-six, and the estate of Tedworth in Hants came into his possession. Here he resolved to start a new pack of hounds to hunt a country touched neither by the New Forest nor the Craven, a country which seemed absolutely impracticable for hunting purposes. No one but a man of iron will and indomitable determination would have dared to face the task of converting those immense tracts of dense woodland into accessible fox coverts and rideable glades. Sporting farmers, who had been born and bred in the place, pointed to the big 1000 acre woods and asked how he expected scent to lie *there*; gentle and simple alike laughed at the idea of the new squire's ever creating a Tedworth hunting country. But Thomas Assheton Smith went to work in that grim, dogged way of his, and difficulty after difficulty went down before his energy and perseverance. The woods were felled, and enormous green rides opened as if by magic to the eyes of the admiring gentry and farmers of the district. And so Tom Smith had his way, and the Tedworth hounds became an accomplished fact. 'Nimrod' in one of his 'Hunting Tours' thus describes a meet with the Tedworth at Weyhill:—

'There were 300 horsemen in the field. Not only was the appearance of the hounds, as hounds, splendid indeed, but their performance was equally good. The scent was wretchedly bad, but they stooped to it like rabbit beagles; and, unfortunate as our day's sport was in other respects, any one would have had a treat in seeing this highly-bred pack pick their way, as it were, inch by inch over one stubble-field. I must own I was delighted, and I wish some huntsmen I could name had been present to take a lesson from their huntsman Mr Smith, whose patience and judgment were conspicuous on this trying occasion. I say *trying* because his fox was just before him, and he had the eyes of a large field upon him. But he never lifted his hounds a yard, though the line of the country was apparently before him; and thus did he hit off his fox, for he did not take that line.'

With an income of nearly £50,000 a year, mainly derived from the mines and quarries on his Welsh estates, Assheton Smith could well afford to do everything in princely style. His hunting establishment was magnificent.

The kennels at Tedworth were situated about ten minutes walk from the house, and close to the Home Farm. They were originally built by Mr Smith on rising ground above the stables; but, owing to the hounds constantly suffering from kennel lameness, although every precaution of draining, ventilation, and paving was resorted to, the situation or subsoil (chalk upon strong clay) was deemed unhealthy, and condemned. Mr Smith had remarked that the lame hounds, when removed below the hill to his Home Farm, and turned into the calf-pens there, soon recovered. This induced him to fix on that spot, well-sheltered by trees and buildings from the north and north-east, for the site of the new kennels. He drew the design for them on half a sheet of paper, which was afterwards put to a scale, and carried out exactly according to the plan by his own carpenter and bricklayer.

Passing up the shrubbery and skirting the edge of the farmyard, you came at once on a slope of undulating green sward, and here, under the eye of one of the whippers-in, scores of loose hounds might be seen taking their exercise. On the top of the hill, open towards the south-west, ranged the kennels, four in number, and as snug in their accommodation as the greatest lover of hounds could desire. Mr Smith at first had the flooring of his kennels paved with flint-stones; but on one occasion, when his hounds were suffering from shoulder lameness, he found it necessary to remove them so quickly that a roomy cart-shed was provided for them. The flooring of this shed was of chalk well rammed down, on the principle of the old Roman barn-floors mentioned in Virgil's Georgics, *cretâ solidanda tenaci*. Here the hounds soon recovered, and upon the flint-stones of the kennel being removed, a great deal of moisture was found collected underneath, although there was no land-spring near. This convinced the squire that Virgil was right, and from that time the yards of the kennels were laid with hard clay or chalk. The hounds were strangers to shoulder-lameness ever afterwards. Their sleeping apartments were raised four feet from the ground, each hound, like his master, going upstairs to bed. They were thatched with reeds, for the sake of warmth in winter and coolness in summer, each loding-house being made to hold twenty couple of hounds. The yards annexed to the respective kennels were raised in the centre, with gutter-bricks all round, so that the water which was laid on by pipes with taps to them, was instantaneously carried off, there being no underground drain to catch and detain the moisture. Close by was the huntsman's house, so that all riot and disturbance might be quelled immediately on any outbreak. The old cart-shed was retained for young hounds and as a place of litter for puppies. Adjoining the kennels was a spacious paddock enclosed with a lofty wall, in which the hounds could run at large when inspected by the huntsman or by strangers. Built into the wall, about the centre of it, was a pavilion with a raised platform, and having a door of admission only on the outside, for the accommodation of ladies coming to see the hounds.

The stables were equally admirable, affording accommodation for fifty hunters, hacks and carriage horses, every one of which, with its name painted up over its box, was in perfect condition, and would follow the master about like a lamb; for Assheton Smith had a most extraordinary power of fascination over both horses and hounds. The great Rarey himself was not a better tamer of horses than the Master of Tedworth. Take this anecdote in illustration of his powers.

One of the most remarkable Irish hunters of the present century was Mr Smith's Fire-King—a sixteen-hand, very large-limbed, light-fleshed, and deep-girthed thorough-bred chestnut. He was bought by Mr William Denham of Kegworth from Mr William Lucas of Liverpool, in January 1840, for £5 only, and was just as unmanageable a savage as ever wore a bridle. However, Mr Denham contrived to beat all Derbyshire on him, both with foxhounds, and Lord Chesterfield's stag-hounds; Will Derry, who was riding one of his lordship's thorough-bred 300-guinea chestnuts, frankly acknowledged on one occasion, that he could not live with him in any part of the run. He also distinguished himself in two runs in Leicestershire, one from Cream Gorse, and the other from Sir H. Goodricke's Gorse. Next day Mr Assheton Smith rode up to Mr Denham at Croxton Park races, and made him an offer of £200 for Fire-King, which his owner declined, unless Mr Smith would make it guineas. On this the latter jocularly remarked that he was the most independent horse-dealer he had ever met with, and was told in rejoinder that had he been independent, he would not have taken 2000 guineas for the horse, as he was sure that no man could expect to have more than one such in his life. Fire-King was very much blemished at the time, so much so that Mr Smith could hardly credit the assurance that he was sound, after having been 'repaired so often.' At this juncture Lord Chesterfield rode up, and Mr Smith on hearing his lordship indorse Mr Denham's statement, that he had never in his life seen a horse that could go better, if so well, to hounds, closed the bargain for guineas. At first they had rather a weary time with him at Tedworth. Mr Smith sent him home on hunting days seven or eight times before he could ride him with confidence; and there is a legend that he not only ran clean away four miles with George Carter, but that the latter assured his master, when he proposed another mount, that he would rather run on foot than get on Fire-King. His master, however, charmed the chestnut into a softer mood at last. On 15th December in the following year (1841) he wrote to Mr Denham, to say that he had got him to go 'as quiet as any horse in his stable!' adding, 'I have hunted a great number of years, I have kept hounds and hunted them for thirty-eight years, and I am quite sure I never had such a horse as he is before, and fully believe I never saw such an one.'

In the year 1840 Assheton Smith paid his memorable visit to Sir Richard Sutton in Lincolnshire, taking eighteen couple of his own hounds with him. *En route* he received an urgent request to give his old country, the Quorn, a day, and he accepted the invitation. The meet was at Rolleston on the 20th of March, and I suppose nothing like it has ever been seen in Leicestershire. Upwards of 2000 superbly-mounted horsemen were present—among them men of the highest rank and station—soldiers, sailors, politicians—for the cream of the sportsmen of the shires flocked from far and near to do honour to their old master, who received such a welcome as well-nigh shook even his iron nerve. It was a splendid tribute of respect and admiration to the greatest sportsman in England, and it was the more remarkable because Assheton Smith was not by any means a popular master. His manner was brusque, and he was at no pains, either in or out of the hunting field to make himself agreeable. There was in him too much of the *fortiter in re*, and too little of the *suaviter in modo*. He was more admired than liked. Yet this brilliant and distinguished company assembled to render their spontaneous homage to his grand qualities as a sportsman. It was, indeed, a red-letter day in the life of Thomas Assheton Smith.

In 1845, his wife, to whom he was devotedly attached, became seriously ill, and the doctors said that she must winter in Madeira. Both husband and wife were loth to leave Tedworth. She had her schools and her poor and her household ; he had his stables and kennels, and the great sport which was his one joy in life. How could either of them exist apart from all that made life worth living for? Then the happy thought occurred to the master: Why not bring Madeira to England? So he set to work and planned out a magnificent conservatory or winter garden, three hundred and fifteen feet long and forty feet wide. Within this glass-roofed enclosure—a miniature Crystal Palace, six years in advance of Sir Joseph Paxton's wondrous fabric—Mrs Smith was to take her daily exercise in a temperature always the same. There were broad walks laid with the finest gravel, thousands of beautiful plants, flowers of brilliant hues and sweetest fragrance. A corridor of glass nine hundred and sixty-five feet in length, warmed throughout with hot-water pipes, connected this winter garden with the house, and, altogether, there was a walk of no less than four hundred and thirty yards straight on end, all under glass.

The time came when the only exercise Thomas Assheton Smith was able to take was under that glass roof, and here, after mounting one of his favourite old hunters with the assistance of a chair, he would ride at a foot-pace up and down those broad walks with a friend beside him to cheer him. But that time did not come until the veteran sportsman had passed fourscore. Up to his eightieth year Assheton Smith showed no sign of mental or physical decay, and he sat as erect in the saddle as he had done any time for seventy years. Only a few months before he completed his eightieth year he had three heavy falls in one day, when out with the Tedworth, yet seemed as little shaken as if he had been but a hard-riding undergraduate.

But in the September of 1856 he had an alarming seizure, which, coupled with troublesome asthma, prostrated him terribly. Yet so wonderful were his powers of recuperation that within an hour of that appalling seizure, which had left him gasping for breath and apparently at death's door, he was in the saddle cantering gaily down the avenue. Nevertheless, that attack had seriously weakened him; he was never again the same man. His straight back was bent, his keen eye grew dim, and when the Tedworth had their opening meet on the 1st of November 1857, for the first time since the formation of the Hunt, the master was not there in scarlet to head them. He rode up in black, for, said he, sadly and seriously, 'If I had worn my hunting gear, and the pack should observe that I could not follow them, they would show their sorrow by refusing to hunt a fox.' A universal gloom fell over the field as the squire, after a last wistful look at his old heroes of the kennels and the stable, turned and went back to the Hall, shivering and shrinking from the cold November air. And so, for the first time the Tedworth went hunting without their master.

From that time he gradually grew worse, but the ruling passion was still strong in him, and there is something to me singularly pathetic in this picture of the great sportsman's last ride, as given by Sir John Eardley Wilmot.

'During this autumn, 1857, his neighbour and friend, Colonel Douglas Pennant, two or three times sent his pack of beagles for Mr Smith's amusement. Even the sight of them turning into the gate appeared to give him new life. On one occasion he had been very ill all the morning, and was threatened with one of his fainting attacks; nevertheless brandy, ether, and other stimulants revived him. About an hour afterwards the hounds arrived, and much to the astonishment and dismay of all about him, he crawled with the help of his valet and butler to the hall-door, and was soon in the saddle. Once there, he immediately looked ten years younger. Observing a horse belonging to Colonel Pennant which he fancied, he dismounted from his own, and, though told the other was rather restive, he determined to mount it and follow the hounds. His groom had strict orders to keep very close to him, with a vial of brandy in his pocket. Some anxious friends followed on foot, and from a piece of high ground watched his movements. They were soon terrified by seeing him thrown off. He was not hurt, and wished to continue the chase, saying "it was curious how he had lost his *gripe* on a horse," which he always said was the secret of his riding; but at last was persuaded to return home in the carriage.'

His life was prolonged for some months after this, mainly by the lavish administration of stimulants, but his sufferings were great, and his dearest friends felt that it was a merciful release when at last death took him on the 9th of September 1858, in the eighty-third year of his age.

Although it is chiefly as the greatest hunting man of his own, or perhaps any other, age that Thomas Assheton Smith is known to fame, yet it is a great mistake to suppose that he was but a sportsman pure and simple. He was a man of very considerable scientific attainments, and of some inventive capacity, which found a vent in shipbuilding. He built several steam and sailing yachts after his own designs, and he undoubtedly discovered, by his own independent experiments, the wave principle in yacht-building. Moreover, he was the originator of steam-gunboats, and his designs were adopted by the Government for the Navy. He was as good a sailor as he was horseman, and no member of the Royal Yacht Club, to which he belonged, was a better master mariner than he. In the management of his great estates in Hampshire and Carnarvonshire he showed not only great business capacity, but a kindliness and consideration for his employees, which won for him their deep and lasting affection. He was always planning schemes for their comfort, and his model cottages, both on his Welsh and English estates, were really appreciated by those for whom they were intended, because they found that their wants had been thoughtfully and sensibly considered and provided for.

For several years Assheton Smith was member for Andover, and discharged his parliamentary duties with the same energy and zeal which he displayed in every other phase of life. Moreover, he did a bit of soldiering at one time. He raised and equipped a troop of Yeomanry at his own expense, and his old friend the Duke of Wellington did him the honour to review the corps in

Tedworth Park, and spoke most highly of their efficiency and soldier-like appearance. The duke had a great regard and respect for Assheton Smith, whom he thought the model of a straightforward, manly, sensible Englishman. It was always a subject for regret to the hero of Waterloo, that the mighty hunter had not joined the Army, 'for,' said he, 'he would have made one of the best cavalry officers in Europe,' and he frequently remarked that many of his most distinguished cavalry officers in the Peninsular War owed their horsemanship to the example of Assheton Smith. The Duke of Wellington, by the way, was himself a warm patron of fox-hunting. Once when he was asked to subscribe to a pack which was in financial difficulties, he said, 'Get what you can, and put my name down for the difference.' The difference was £600 a year, which the duke cheerfully paid for many years.

As a Master of Foxhounds, Assheton Smith was extremely scrupulous in all that pertains to the etiquette of the hunting-field—the essence of neatness in his own person, he detested the slightest appearance of slovenliness in anyone else, and he generally showed pretty plainly his disapproval of any laxity in this respect among those who came out with his hounds. Of his own rights he was jealous in the extreme, and would allow no hounds but his own to draw a covert, however outlying, which he believed to form part of his own country. Yet no man was more courteous when a neighbouring pack accidentally clashed with his own.

For thirty-two years he hunted the Tedworth without asking for any subscription—all he requested of the landowners in return for the sport he gave them was that they would oblige him by preserving foxes. He was hardly ever known to dig a fox, and would not have a terrier in his kennel. 'Let a good fox save himself any way he can,' he used to say, and would never let a stout-goer be disturbed after he went to earth. But he has been known to have a 'dirty, ringing rascal,' dug out and thrown to the hounds. His average of kills for those thirty-two seasons was fifty brace—in one eventful season his hounds brought seventy brace of foxes to hand. He always carried about with him a favourite pocket-knife with which he used to say he had cut off fifteen hundred brushes. Vulpicide was to him a crime for which death itself was too lenient a penalty. And his wife used to tell how, on one occasion, he terrified all the ladies at the breakfast-table by dropping the newspaper with an exclamation of horror. 'What has happened?' they cried, expecting to hear of some awful European calamity. 'Happened,' he groaned, looking over his spectacles solemnly, 'why, by Jove! a dog fox has been burned to death in a barn!'

His temper was choleric and frequently got him into trouble. During the railway panic of 1845 a London solicitor determined to serve a writ on Mr Assheton Smith for a bill of costs connected with surveying, etc., for a new line to be called the Worcester and Porthdynllaen Railway. The Master of the Tedworth was staying at his town house in Hyde Park Gardens, and was in blissful ignorance of the plot being hatched against him, when the footman, not understanding the business of the caller, showed him into his master's study. When the attorney's clerk, with the cheek of his class, served the writ, Assheton Smith rose in his wrath, and, though in his seventieth year, promptly knocked the emissary of the law down. The man rose to his feet, and seeing that this athletic and irascible old gentleman was about to repeat the assault, incontinently turned and fled. A summons was served next day upon Assheton Smith, who thereupon consulted a friend in the Temple as to what he should do next. 'Offer him a five-pound note and get him to withdraw the summons.' But this the testy old sportsman would not condescend to do. He went and faced the charge at Marylebone, and conducted himself so violently, threatening, it is said, to assault the magistrate on the bench, that it was lucky he got off with a fine of £5 and costs.

His irritable temper was apt to show itself at the slightest affront to his dignity, a point on which he was very touchy, as the following anecdotes will show.

After Mr Smith gave up the Burton country, he resided in the Vale for several seasons, being frequently the guest of the Duke of Rutland, and joining the various packs in the neighbourhood from Belvoir Castle. 'I've known him,' says Dick Christian, 'come all the way from Belvoir to Gumley of a morning, two-and-thirty miles to cover, and back again at night.' To accomplish these long distances he was up early at the Castle, and breakfasted alone. On one occasion, he was not satisfied with the breakfast prepared for him, and complained to the footman who waited, that he did not think that he had the attention given to him to which he was entitled. The duke's servant received the rebuke in silence, but on the following morning when the sportsman came down to breakfast, he was surprised to see all the footmen in the Castle enter the room in their state liveries, and take their stations around the table. The duke, to whom his guest's complaint had been reported, feeling satisfied that every attention had been paid to Mr Smith, for whom he always entertained a sincere regard, took this significant mode of reproving his testy humour. At another time he complained of the scarcity of muffins, upon which the servants received orders, when next the guests assembled at the breakfast table, to pour in upon him a perpetual stream of muffins. Each footman, in turn, accordingly presented to the bewildered squire an unceasing succession of hot plates, the chorus being, 'Muffins, Mr Smith.'

But with all his faults of temper Thomas Assheton Smith was a warm, generous, faithful friend. If he disliked a man, he let him see it plainly. If he liked a man, he grappled him to his heart with hooks of steel. He was honest and thorough in every phase of his life. His good sense, his courage, his utter contempt for danger, his splendid horsemanship, his passionate love of sport—these are qualities which I am proud to think you might search the world over and never find combined in any but an Englishman.

JOHN MYTTON.

THE late Sir Bernard Burke, in his fascinating chronicle of the *Vicissitudes of Families*, has given nothing more striking or more mournful than the sudden downfall of the Myttons of Halston. Here, as he says, was a family far more ancient than, and apparently as vigorous as, the grand old oaks which were once the pride of Halston, destroyed, after centuries of honourable and historic eminence, by the mad follies of one man in the brief space of eighteen years.

As far back as the reign of Edward the First the Myttons of Halston were prominent among the magnates of Shropshire and Merionethshire. They distinguished themselves both in peace and war; as soldiers, in the Wars of the Roses and the great fight between King Charles and the Parliament, as High Sheriffs, from the time of the Plantagenets to that of the Guelphs. And yet, strangely enough, the only one of them all known to fame is the 'mad squire' who, almost within living memory, brought ruin and degradation upon his ancient line. To this day the name of Jack Mytton is remembered with something like affection, despite all his faults and follies, by the sportsmen of Shropshire, and that he was not wholly unworthy of that affectionate remembrance, I shall endeavour to make apparent in the following brief sketch of his career as an enthusiastic, though certainly hare-brained votary of the Chase.

John Mytton was born on the 30th of September 1796, at the family seat of Halston, in Shropshire, three miles from Oswestry, and was left fatherless at two years of age. His mother spoiled him, and by the time he was ten years of age, the young heir was what is called a 'regular pickle.' He was expelled from Westminster and Harrow in succession. At the former school he spent £800 a year, exactly double his allowance, and wrote when he was only fourteen years of age to Lord Eldon, the then Lord Chancellor, requesting an increase of income, as he was going to be married. The Lord Chancellor replied, 'Sir, if you cannot live on your income, you may starve, and if you marry I will commit you to prison.' At the age of nineteen he entered, as a cornet, the 7th Hussars, and joined that regiment in France with the army of occupation. But as there was no more fighting, Cornet Mytton was at leisure to enter into all kinds of youthful mischief.

One of his feats was borrowing £3000 of a banker at St Omer one day, and losing it at an E.O. table in Calais the next. He also lost 16,000 napoleons to a certain captain at billiards, which sum he was unable to pay at the moment. But this score was wiped off in a more agreeable manner. The whole thing was suspected of being a cross, which it no doubt was, consequently the colonel of Mytton's regiment, the then Earl of Uxbridge, forbade his paying the money; and the captain in question was afterwards implicated in a transaction which went far to prove that Lord Uxbridge was morally right. When Mytton came of age he found himself possessed of an estate of about £10,000 a year and £60,000 of accumulated cash, but a large portion of the latter had to go towards liquidating his already numerous debts. Quitting the army, he married, at the age of twenty-three, Harriet, the eldest daughter of the then lately deceased Sir Tyrrwhitt Jones, Bart. of Stanley Hall, Shropshire. The bridegroom was attended by the Earl of Uxbridge and the Earl of Denbigh, K.G., and the wedding was one of the events of the season. The issue of their union was only one daughter. Mrs Mytton died a few years after her marriage, and there can be no doubt that her death was accelerated, if not caused, by her husband's insane and cruel conduct.

John Mytton was physically a fine animal: in height about five feet nine inches, in weight twelve stone, with magnificent shoulders, a splendid chest, and an arm, the biceps muscle of which was larger than that of Jackson, the celebrated pugilist, who was believed to be the most powerful man of his time in England. He was fond of displaying his strength, but it was perhaps fortunate that he steadily refused to learn boxing. As it was, in a 'turn up' he was what is called a very awkward customer, and knocked down his man, when he could get at him, as if he had been a ninepin. But he was nearly ignorant of the science of self-defence, and never attempted to attain it. His bull-dog courage, however, added to his tremendous blow, enabled him to beat any ordinary man; and so well was his prowess known, that few ventured to encounter him.

In dress Mytton was peculiar, not to say eccentric. He never wore any but the thinnest and finest silk stockings, with such thin boots or shoes, that in winter he rarely had dry feet. To flannel he was a stranger from the time he left off petticoats. Even his hunting breeches were without lining; he wore one small waistcoat, always open in the front from the second of the lower buttons, and about home he was as often without a hat as with one. His winter shooting gear was a light jacket, white linen trousers without lining or drawers; and in frost and snow he waded through all water that came in his way. These, however, are not exceptional marks of hardihood. I know men of the present day who go as lightly clad through all the seasons. But Mytton went further than this. He would sometimes strip to his shirt to follow wildfowl in hard weather, and once actually laid himself down in the snow, with absolutely not a stitch on him but his shirt, to await the arrival of the ducks at dusk.

He would ride several days a week to coverts fifty miles distant from Halston, and return thither to his dinner, at which meal his appetite and digestion, until his stomach was weakened by excessive indulgence in wine, were something astounding. His escapes were marvellous, and, so to speak, miraculous. He was run away with by horses in gigs, and upset times without number; left struggling in deep water without the faintest knowledge of swimming; badly mauled in street brawls and rows in gambling hells, yet he came out of all without serious injury. Curiously enough, too, in a duelling age he never issued a challenge or received one. In his management of horses he was extraordinarily reckless. Driving tandem once, he wished, he said, to see if the leader were a good timber-jumper, and actually put the horses at a closed turnpike gate; the leader took the gate in beautiful style, but, of course, left the wheeler on his nose with the shafts snapped in two. Neither man nor horse, however, was hurt. In the saddle, too, he ran prodigious risks of his life, not only in riding at apparently impracticable fences with hounds, but in falling from his horse when intoxicated. He once galloped at full speed over a rabbit warren, to try whether or not his horse would fall, which, of course, it did, and rolled over him.

His perfect contempt of danger was truly characteristic; but not content with the possession of it, he endeavoured to impart it to his friends. As he was one day driving in a gig a gentleman, who expressed a strong regard for his neck, and hinted that he considered it in some danger from the recklessness of his charioteer, Mytton asked, 'Were you ever much hurt, then, by being upset in a gig?' 'No, thank God,' said his companion, 'for I never was upset in one.' 'What!' replied Mytton, '*never* upset in a gig? What a d—d slow fellow you must have been all your life!' And running his near wheel up the bank, over they both went, fortunately without either being much injured.

There are many stories of his robbing his friends in the character of an amateur highwayman, but they are of the ordinary type of such practical jokes. Once he disguised himself as a beggar and begged at his own house, when he was roughly used by the servants, and would probably have been torn to pieces by his own dogs, a modern Actæon, had he not fled for protection to his tame bear, Nell, who at once recognised her master, and raising herself on her haunches, kept both dogs and men at bay. With reference to this bear there is another story. One day, hearing that George Underhill, the celebrated Shropshire horse-dealer, was in the house on his road from Chester fair, Mytton sent for that worthy, had him conducted into the dining-room, made him excessively drunk, and put him to bed with two bull-dogs and the said bear. He also once rode into the dining-room mounted on the bear, in full hunting costume, to the dismay of the guests. The animal carried him very quietly for a certain time, but on being pricked by the spur, she bit her rider through the calf of the leg, inflicting a severe wound. On another occasion Mr Mytton fought a savage yard dog with his fists, and beat it.

But perhaps the most remarkable instance of his courage and recklessness was the following :—

He was one day engaged to dine with a friend at some distance from Halston, and came as usual in his tandem. After dinner the conversation turned on the danger of that mode of harnessing horses, from the little command the driver can have over the leader. Mytton at once expressed his dissent from this doctrine, and being under the influence of the 'rosy god,' offered to bet a pony (£25) all round that he would, *that night*, drive his tandem across the country into the turnpike road, a distance of half a mile, having in his progress to get over a sunk fence, three yards wide ; a broad, deep drain, and two stiff quick-set fences, with ditches on the further side ! The bets offered were taken by several of the party present, to the tune of £150 and upwards, and after the necessary preparations, all turned out to see the fun, although in justice it should be said, as Mytton was then under age, it was not only proposed to him that the bets made should be off, but he was most strongly urged not to make the attempt. This, however, with him had always a contrary effect ; and, twelve men with lanthorns on poles having been procured to aid the light of the moon, away went Mytton as soon as the appointed signal was given.

The first obstacle was the sunk fence, *into* which, as may be expected, he was landed; but the opposite side being on a gradual slope, from bottom to top, the carriage and its extraordinary inmate, by dint of whipping, were drawn out without receiving injury. Nowise disconcerted, he sent his team at the next fence—the wide drain—and such was the pace he went at, that it was cleared by a yard or more; but the jerk pitched Mytton on the wheeler's back; crawling over the dashing leather, however, he resumed his seat, and got his horses again into the proper direction, and taking the two remaining fences in gallant style, got safe into the turnpike road and pocketed the cash. This occurred at Mr Walford's, of Cronkhill, about four miles from Shrewsbury.

Mytton may be said to have lived in a storm, for a row was his delight. Nevertheless, although there was an apparent ferocity of temper about him at times, it was blended with much kindness of heart, and he scarcely ever thrashed a man that he did not give him something afterwards as amends. I remember hearing of an unfortunate horsebreaker having been carried by a half-broken colt into the midst of his hounds. Mytton flogged him severely, and then gave him two guineas. He would not, however, suffer any man to take an improper liberty with him, and, in that case, there was no compensation for a thrashing. A Shrewsbury tradesman, when a little 'sprung,' ventured to call him 'Johnny.' Mytton floored him on the spot.

Curiously enough, extravagant though he was in other respects, John Mytton made no great show in his establishment at Halston. There was every comfort, but no display, and, had he conducted all his affairs with the same regularity and simplicity as his *ménage* at his ancestral seat, he would never have run through upwards of half a million of money in less than fifteen years, as he did. But it was not difficult to find where the screw was loose in his expenditure. He kept his foxhounds entirely at his own cost, and upon a very extensive scale, for he hunted *two* countries without subscription. His racing establishment was on a still larger scale, and he often had from fifteen to twenty horses in training at the same time. His average number of thoroughbred stock, including brood mares and yearlings, was about thirty-six, which probably cost him something like £4000 a year. His game preserves, too, were a severe drain upon his income; for, besides such items as £1500 in one bill to a London dealer for pheasants and foxes alone, there was the formation of miles of plantations and coverts, which necessitated a permanent staff of fifty labourers to keep them in order. The pheasants in the preserves were as thick as sparrows at the barn door, and the hares were running about like rabbits. The average annual slaughter was from 1200 to 1500 brace of pheasants and from 1500 to 2000 hares, besides an enormous bag of partridges, for he always made a point of killing fifty brace of 'birds' to his own gun on the first of September, and he and his brother-in-law, Mr Walter Griffin, have been known to kill 600 head of game in a single forenoon. He had immense grouse moors, too, on which the sport was equal to any in the three kingdoms. As a game and rifle shot John Mytton had probably no superior in his day.

Moreover, though as far removed from a dandy as a man well could be, the Squire of Halston was a great friend to the tailors, and had frequently in his wardrobes as many as 150 pairs of breeches and trousers, with a proportionate number of coats and waistcoats. In his cellars there were 'hogsheads of ale, standing like soldiers in close column, and wine enough in wood and bottle for a Roman Emperor.' He made his own malt, and 'JOHN MYTTON, LICENSED MALTSTER,' was painted in large letters over the malthouse door. How much he spent on post-horses it is impossible to tell; but there was hardly a post-boy in England who did not know 'Squire Mytton,' and lament his fall. He never stayed at an inn without giving the waiter a guinea, and he would never pay a tradesman's bill until he had received a writ, an eccentricity for which the lawyers had cause to bless him.

But to come to John Mytton's career as a fox-hunter, which is the *raison d'être* of his appearing in these pages. He commenced hunting the Shropshire and Shiffnal countries (now the Albrighton) five days a week, and continued to do so, solely at his own expense, for five seasons. He appears to have been as eccentric in his hunting arrangements as in everything else he undertook, for he frequently had out horses not fit to run, and allowed his packs to become such a queer mixture that they might have been intended to hunt stag, fox, or hare, or all three, for aught one could gather from their appearance. As a horseman, however, he had not many equals, and could ride over a course as well as a country, whilst, making allowances for the seemingly impracticable fences he would ride at, he got but few falls. As a specimen of his reckless daring, I may mention that when returning home one day with his friend 'Nimrod,' he on his horse Baronet, in cold blood, leaped a brook which considerably exceeded nine yards in width; and on another occasion he cleared a gate seven feet high. Of his prowess in the hunting-field, many stories are told, from which I select the two following, given by his biographer 'Nimrod.'

'During the period of Sir Bellingham Graham's hunting Shropshire,' says that celebrated sporting writer, 'Mytton performed several gallant feats in the field. Whilst suffering severely from the effects of a fall, and with his right arm in a sling, he rode his favourite hunter Baronet over the park paling of the late Lord Berwick, of Atsham, near Shrewsbury, to the astonishment of the whole field—Sir Bellingham himself exclaiming, "Well done, Neck or Nothing; you are not a bad one to breed from." With the same hounds he signalised himself in a run from Bomer-wood to Haughmond-hill, when the River Severn brought the field to a check. Three or four of them managed to get their horses into a boat, but Mytton scorned its assistance. "Let all who call themselves sportsmen," he exclaimed, "follow me," and dashing into the stream, gained the opposite bank, and was one of the few who saw the fox killed. It must be observed that Mytton was no swimmer, and the Severn is broad and deep, with banks none of the best.

'On another occasion he nearly lost his life in the Severn, in a run with his own hounds near Bridgnorth. All the field but himself crossed in a horse ferry-boat, but he gallantly plunged in, though the river was much swollen by rain at the time. His mare—a fine hunter, called Cara Sposa—was carried a long way down the stream by the current, and, although she at length gained the opposite side with him, the bank would not admit of her landing herself. His whipper-in, Ned Evans, however, who had crossed by the boat, fortunately came to his assistance and pulled him up the bank, leaving the mare in the water. Nor does the story end here. Jumping on the whip's horse, Mytton got to his hounds, and the mare was eventually brought ashore without much injury.'

But even that feat was eclipsed by the following, which 'Nimrod' thus describes:—

'Perhaps Mytton never made himself much more conspicuous in the field than he did upon what, a few years back, was well known in the hunting circles of Cheshire, Shropshire, and Staffordshire, as "The Shavington Day." This was the day on which a trial of speed, nose, and bottom was to be made between the hounds of Sir Henry Mainwaring, of Peover Hall, Cheshire, commonly called "the Cheshire hounds," hunted by Will Head, afterwards huntsman to the Marquis of Hastings; those kept jointly by Sir Edward Smythe of Acton Burmal Park, Mr Smythe Owen of Condover Hall, and Mr Lloyd of Aston Hall, each in the county of Salop (late Sir Bellingham Graham's) commonly called "the Shropshire hounds;" and those of Mr Wicksted, whose kennel is at Betley, near Newcastle-under-Lyne, from which they hunt what is called "the Woore country," once hunted by the late Sir Thomas Mostyn, previous to his taking Oxfordshire, and likewise a part of Shropshire, hunted by Charles Wells, formerly huntsman to the Oakley. The interest taken for many surrounding miles in this extraordinary, and, I believe I may add, *unique* undertaking, was immense; and it was supposed that independently of the contents of carriages, there were considerably more than a thousand horsemen in the field, about seven hundred of them clad in scarlet.

'Mytton, as usual, was resolved to make himself conspicuous in more ways than one on this memorable occasion; and on the preceding evening he arrived at Whitchurch, to be near the scene of action, where he had ordered the best dinner that could be provided for himself and two friends who accompanied him. But the dinner at Whitchurch and its evils were not "sufficient for the day;" he ordered his carriage in the evening, and drove to the village of Wrenbury, the rendezvous of the different packs, where a main of cocks was being fought. Having seen what was going on there, he returned to his quarters at Whitchurch, and after drawing a commercial traveller from his bed and thoroughly dosing him with wine, retired at length to his own.

'The place of meeting to decide this important affair was Shavington Hall, the seat of the late Viscount Kilmorey, who, although but little of a fox-hunter himself, was a great promoter of the sport by his strict preservation of foxes. The time fixed was eleven o'clock, and at that hour a scene highly interesting to sportsmen presented itself, and indeed to all persons who witnessed it; for it is well known that nothing adds more to fine scenery, which this park affords, than a numerously attended pack of hounds in motion.

'The *modus operandi* was this:—Six couples out of each pack were selected for the trial, forming a properly sized pack, and they appeared in the field attended by their respective huntsmen, namely—Will Head for the Cheshire; John Wrigglesworth for the Shropshire; and Charles Wells for Mr Wicksted's; Will Head acting as leading huntsman of the day, by reason of its being the country which his hounds claimed as their own, as well as Cheshire being the senior pack.

'These being the best days of the Tomkinsons, the Gleggs, the Brookes, Jack Ford and sundry other first-flight Cheshire men, it may naturally be imagined that a spirit of rivalry amongst men would accompany the trial of speed in hounds, and that Mytton would be amongst the foremost to distinguish himself. That he came prepared to do so was evident by the fact of his having had his capital Hit-or-Miss mare reserved for this particular occasion, orders having been given to the groom to "have her right fit to go."

'Precisely at the hour of twelve the business of the day commenced; the pack were thrown into what is called the Big Wood in Shavington Park, from which a fox almost immediately broke, and having stood before them for thirty minutes at a very severe pace was lost near the village of Clovely. Mytton very soon got the lead, and very soon lost it, and nearly his life at the same time; for coming to a deep sunk fence or ha-ha, at which there was a high and stiff rail on the rising side, which he gallantly charged, his mare fell and gave him a severe fall, in addition to his being much hurt by another person's horse, that had followed him, tumbling upon him and crushing him. "NOW FOR THE HONOUR OF SHROPSHIRE," said he, when he rode at this fence, which indicated two things: First, that he considered the fence something like a stopper; and secondly, that he was determined not to be beaten by any man in the field, so long as his mare could keep on her legs. This fall, however, shook him much, and although he remounted and went on—bleeding and bare-headed, for his hat was too much crushed to be worth picking up—he was forced to content himself with following a leader for the remainder of this day.'

Mytton, however, was no mere reckless 'thruster.' He had a thorough knowledge not only of the art of horsemanship, but of the nature and temperament of the horses he rode, and to this feature of his riding 'Nimrod' pays the following remarkable tribute:—

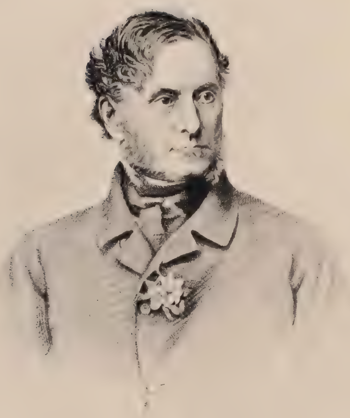
'In speaking of Mytton as a horseman, I have stated the singular fact of his never having so completely tired his horses in the field as to have been obliged to walk home, which I, in great part, attribute to his strength of hand in assisting them in their work. It is true he rode excellent horses, for bad ones were useless to him; but he really appeared to have a sort of magic influence over their tempers—at all events it seemed as if they sympathised with him in his frolics—for they were always tranquil under him, and would do almost anything he required them to do. He would ride them up steps and down steps, and round the inside of the house without their appearing to be the least bit disconcerted or alarmed, nor did I ever hear that he was a sufferer by such dangerous frolics.'

John Mytton, the enthusiastic sportsman and dashing Master of Foxhounds, was, as he deserved to be, the most popular man in Shropshire. Nor was he without other claims to popularity. He was a kind and considerate landlord, the most lavishly liberal of hosts, the best farmer in the county, and, until his habits of inebriety grew upon him, a capital companion—for his natural talents were excellent. He read with unusual rapidity, but with such quick intelligence, that he remembered what he read. He had always an apt quotation at hand from a Greek or Latin author, and there was a conscious feeling of ability about him, to which he was fond of giving expression. His off-hand addresses to his constituents during his first contest for Shrewsbury in 1819, were particularly neat, appropriate and spirited, though they were composed on the spur of the moment, and sent to the press before the ink in which they were written was dry. As to his politics, it is difficult to express an opinion, for he never uttered a word on the subject. It was, however, a characteristically mad thing of him to spend £10,000 to obtain a seat in Parliament, to which he attached so little value when he had won it, that only for one half-hour, on the day on which he was sworn in, was he even seen in the House of Commons.

Extravagance and eccentricity would, no doubt, have been overlooked by county society in the scion of an ancient and honourable house, and John Mytton might have held his place among those of his own order to the end, but for his intemperate habits. The almost constant state of intoxication, in which he latterly lived, became insufferable to his neighbours of all classes, and even to his oldest friends. So the Squire of Halston, being thus voted 'impossible' by the county families, betook himself, like the equally mad and reckless Lord Barrymore of Wargrave, to the society of his inferiors in station. There is no need to dwell upon the steps of his gradual downfall and final degradation. What hope was there for a man who, when his agent pressed retrenchment upon him, with the assurance that if for six years he would but content himself with an income of £6000 a year, his fine estates might yet be saved, could deliberately answer, 'No, I would not give a straw for my life if it was to be passed on £6000 a year!' And what object is to be gained by lifting the veil to disclose the domestic scandals in the life of a man, who, during his last twelve years, was never sober? His daily quantum of port wine was six bottles, but, even in spite of this excess, he would probably have lived far longer than he did, had he not, in an evil hour, discarded port for brandy. Even his adamantine constitution, 'perhaps the hardiest ever bestowed upon man,' as 'Nimrod' says, was not proof against that. He went from bad to worse, till in the year 1830 the world heard without surprise that 'it was all up with Jack Mytton.' Everything that could be sold was sold; upwards of £80,000 worth of the grand old timber of Halston Park went to pay his debts, and he retired to Calais with just a small pittance, sufficient to keep body and soul together. There he completed the wreck of his magnificent physique by drinking brandy till he really became a raving lunatic. On partially recovering his senses he came over to England, where he was promptly arrested and thrown into the King's Bench Prison, beyond the gates of which he was destined never to pass alive. For there, in misery and squalor, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, died the descendant of twenty generations of honourable and opulent Shropshire gentlemen.

The story of his sad end moved the pity of his fellow-shiresmen, and when his body was laid in the ancestral vault, three thousand persons, of all ranks and conditions, assembled to pay their last tribute to the memory of one in whom much good was mixed with much evil.

In concluding his somewhat mawkish biography of his friend John Mytton, 'Nimrod' used these words: 'It is consoling to think that estates, amounting to £4500 a year, were out of his reach by entail, and still remain to his family. Thus it is possible that by the aid of a ten-year minority and *barring another Jack Mytton*, Halston and its oaks may yet flourish.' But unfortunately there *was* 'another Jack Mytton.' The son and heir (by the second Mrs Mytton), who was an Eton boy when his father died, was a true 'chip of the old block'—generous, high-spirited, big-hearted, open-handed, with an ineradicable craze for spending money. He went the pace as his sire had done before him; was one of the wildest spirits that met in that haunt of noble madcaps, the once notorious 'Limmers' Hotel'; was known in every sporting 'crib' in London and Newmarket as a devoted patron of the Turf, the Ring, and the dice-box, and when he had reached the length of his tether, sank into ignoble indigence. The generosity of some old friends of the family, notably Lord Combermere and Sir Watkin Wynn, rescued him from destitution, and provided him with a home, where in modest comfort he ended his days in the spring of 1875, at the age of fifty-one. He had broken the entail with the consent of his son who predeceased him, and his ancestral estate was sold for £150,000 to Mr Edward Wright, head of the great Manchester firm of Wright & Son. So Halston and its oaks passed for ever out of the hands of the Myttons, whose place there knows them no more.



Forster

LORD FORESTER.

THERE are no qualities, so far as my experience goes, which are more frequently transmitted from father to son than those which go to the making of the sportsman. The highest intellectual gifts are but rarely hereditary, and for these a man is, perhaps, oftener indebted to his mother than his father. But the sporting 'strain' is essentially masculine, derived from male ancestry, and apparently more susceptible of transmission from generation to generation than almost any other human instinct. Had I the space I could enumerate instances of hereditary sportsmanship—cases in which the taste for a sport and the skill necessary for proficiency in it have been handed down in almost unbroken succession.

The good sportsman with whom I am immediately concerned here was, at any rate, a proof of this heredity. His grand-uncle was that fine old hunting Squire Forester of Willey Hall, whose story, coupled with that of his famous whipper-in, Tom Moody, I have already told. His father was the heir of the old squire, and, as Cecil Forester, was renowned through the Shires before the present century was yet in its teens. He and his friend Mr Childe of Kinlet, 'Flying Childe' as they called him, were the two most dashing and daring horsemen of their day, and initiated that practice of hard-riding which was thought by many old sportsmen to have spoiled all enjoyment of the *science* of hunting. The way Cecil Forester would press upon hounds was trying to a conscientious master of the old school. 'We had a pretty find to-day,' said Hugo Meynell once with bitter sarcasm; 'first came the fox, then Cecil Forester, and *then* my hounds.' Yet he was not a mere 'thruster.'

'Nimrod' thus bears witness to his excellence as a judge of horseflesh as well as a rider: 'I hesitate not in asserting that in his knowledge of the points, action and capabilities of the English hunter, and in his skill in the art of riding to hounds, he has never been surpassed in any day.' He had hands almost, if not quite, as wonderful as those of Lord Wilton, and legends of his feats in the hunting-field still linger in Leicestershire.

On his splendid hunter Bernardo he once cleared a water jump of *thirty-one feet.* He was, too, an inveterate practical joker, and if he could play a trick upon the field he would never miss the chance. On one occasion, when he had got a good lead in a quick thing, and no one else was close at his heels, he came to a park-paling which even *he* found it impossible to 'negotiate.' But, casting his keen eyes round, he spied a bridle-gate in which the park-keeper had left the key. He promptly popped through, put the key in his pocket, bade 'good-bye' to the field, and had the rest of the run all to himself. His motto seemed to have been that everything is fair in sport, as in love or war, but to shut one's brother-sportsmen out from a good thing, in order to have the sole enjoyment of it, seems to me an act of selfishness utterly unworthy of a true sportsman, and, even if done as a joke, is scarcely a thing to be proud of. But everything was apparently forgiven to Cecil Forester. ''Tis only pretty Fanny's way.' If any one else had played such pranks, he would probably have been sent to Coventry. But Cecil Forester was a chartered libertine, whose fascinating manners and dashing *bonhomie* captivated men and women alike. For thirty years as Cecil Forester, and afterwards as Lord Forester, of which title he was first holder, he rode and lived as hard as any man could do. Then gout laid him by the heels, and he was reluctantly compelled to bid farewell to the hunting-field. He died in May 1828, and his son reigned in his stead.

The second Lord Forester, whose portrait adorns these pages, was born on the 9th of August 1801, and educated at Westminster and Christ Church, Oxford. He soon showed himself to be a chip of the old block, and in his undergraduate days was among the first flight with the Bicester, what time Sir Thomas Mostyn was Master, and such clippers as Lord Jersey, Griff Lloyd, and Sir Henry Peyton shed brilliancy upon the meets of that famous pack.

After leaving Oxford, Lord Forester went straight to Melton, then in the glory of its 'golden age,' when the 'Four M's,' Maher, Maxse, Moore, and Musgrave, Captain John White, Lords Sefton, Plymouth, and Lichfield 'painted the town red,' whilst Thomas Assheton Smith showed unrivalled sport in the field. In that day no ploughshare had ever desecrated those virgin pastures, and the gallops over limitless grassland were the finest to be had in England. I have already quoted 'Nimrod's' tribute to the first Lord Forester, and this is what he has to say of the second. 'Is there a quick thing in Leicestershire in which Lord Forester is not in his place, and that place the front rank? I never saw a young sportsman so fond of hounds as this kind-hearted nobleman.'

In November 1830 the Duke of Rutland announced that he must reduce the number of hunting days of his hounds per week, unless some younger man would undertake the Mastership. The eyes of the Hunt were at once turned to Lord Forester. Here was a nobleman, young, vigorous, rich, the son of a famous hunting sire, with a profound knowledge of all that pertained to the Chase. What better sportsman could they have to carry the horn? So Lord Forester undertook to hunt the Duke of Rutland's country, and for eight-and-twenty seasons gave the members of the Hunt as brilliant sport as any man could wish for.

With such kennel huntsmen as Goosey, Goodall and Cooper, and with his own naturally good eye for a horse and a hound, it was not surprising that Lord Forester's kennels and stables became famous. His hounds were noted for their stoutness, and they had need of that quality, for Lord Forester was one who extracted the last ounce of sport out of every day's hunting. It was his practice to draw as long as there was light, and when Will Goodall was asked 'What's o'clock?' his invariable answer used to be, 'I never carry a watch, as my lud always draws till dark.' No day was too long, no fox too stout for these hounds. Their condition was perfect, and there was no Master in England who did not set great store on the Forester blood for staying power.

In 1858 Lord Forester, finding that years were beginning to tell upon him, decided to bring his active career as a Master of Foxhounds to a close. The announcement of his resignation was received with general regret, and the good sportsmen to whom he had for eight-and-twenty years given such excellent sport showed their appreciation of his rare qualities as a Master by presenting him with an exquisite group of statuary in silver, representing a scene from his own hunting experiences, whilst Will Goodall, his huntsman, at the same time received a handsome testimonial in the shape of a purse of 300 sovereigns.

Lord Forester did not marry till late in life. He was fifty-six when the widow of the last Earl of Melbourne became his wife. Before coming into the title at his father's death, he sat for two years, 1826 to 1828, as M.P. for Wenlock, a constituency which both his grand-uncle, the squire, and his father had represented before him. When the Conservatives came into power under Sir Robert Peel, on the break-up of Lord Melbourne's ministry in 1841, Lord Forester was appointed Captain of the Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms, and was created a Privy Councillor. He held that appointment, attached to the Royal Household, till 1846. He died on the 10th of October 1874, having not long completed his seventy-third year. A fine horseman, an excellent shot, skilled in all manner of woodcraft, and as keen a foxhunter as ever lived, Lord Forester well deserves to be held in remembrance as an excellent specimen of the typical English gentleman and sportsman.

JACK MUSTERS.

IT would, no doubt, have been more decorous to have given the subject of my present sketch his full title of John Chaworth Musters, but it is as Jack Musters that he is best known to fame, and that fact alone is significant of his popularity.

In a quaint poem, entitled 'The Hierarchie of Angels,' Thomas Heywood, the Elizabethan dramatist, thus notes the significance attaching to abbreviated Christian names.

> 'Mellifluous SHAKESPEARE, whose enchanting quill
> Commanded mirth or passion, was but *Will*:
> And famous *Jonson*, though his learned pen
> Be dipt in Castaly, is still but *Ben*.
>
> . . . .
>
> Nor speak I thus that any here exprest
> Should think themselves less worthy than the rest,
> Whose names have their full syllable and sound:
>
> . . . .
>
> I, for my part,
> (Think others what they please), accept that heart
> Which courts my love in most familiar phrase. . . .
> . . . . I hold he loves me best who calls me Tom.'

With such an eminent authority to support me, then, I need make no further apology for the heading I have chosen.

The De Musters or Monasteriis, from whom my hero was descended, claim to have 'come over with the Conqueror,' and to have been settled in Nottinghamshire for eight centuries. How far that claim can be maintained by evidence, I am not in a position to say: but I feel that so impressive a fact adds dignity to my subject, and, therefore, I give it without question. Jack Musters was the only son of John Musters of Colwick Hall, by his wife Sophie, one of the most famous beauties of her day, and was born in Grosvenor Square on the 6th of July 1777. In due course he was sent to Eton, where he distinguished himself by his memorable fight with Thomas Assheton Smith, to which I have already referred. From Eton, Jack went to Oxford, but persuaded his father to let him leave the University before taking a degree, and accepted a commission in the Notts Militia, then quartered in Scotland, where he was able to combine with his military duties the pursuit of the sports most congenial to him. In connection with his career as a militia officer, the following anecdote is told. His company, like the bulk of militiamen at that time, were very far from steady in their evolutions, particularly when charging with fixed bayonets, some of them stopping in their charge without the word of command, and others waiting for it.

'We'll do that again,' cried Captain Jack one day. 'Damn it, you can hear, so now, remember, no more stopping till I give the word "halt," and mind, above all things, your "dressing"—that is, keep your line.'

In order to see how they obeyed him, he placed himself several yards ahead of their centre. Facing his men, and depending on his running powers, he retreated backwards as they came on.

'Charge!' he shouted in his powerful voice—and they did charge. Musters' legs did their office well, but having no eyes in the back of his head, he was unaware of the presence of a quick-set brambly 'bullfinch,' immediately in his rear, into which he fell plump, his face to his friends and his back to the blackthorn bayonets of the ambushed foe. The agony of the moment made him forget the proper word of command. His men, delighted with the fun produced by their captain's ludicrous position, came on with their bayonets levelled at his face. At last he remembered the word.

'Halt, and be damned to you!' he thundered. The company, of course, obeyed, but not very steadily, as privates, non-commissioned officers, ensign and lieutenant, were all in fits of laughter, in which Musters at last heartily joined.

Jack's father had, in the year 1770, bought Lord Richard Manners Sutton's hounds, and removing them from Kelham, had hunted with them what is now the South Notts country. In 1798 he made over to his son, then aged one-and-twenty, a portion of the country, and set him up with a contribution of ten couples from his own kennels. The fact was, that father and son could not get on together in the hunting-field. Jack was too impatient and impetuous for his sire, who belonged to the steady old pottering school. 'Damn you, keep 'em on,' he was perpetually shouting to the huntsman and whips, when he thought the old squire was out of earshot; but sometimes the latter overheard these mutinous remarks, and would shout back angrily, 'Let 'em alone, they're *my* hounds *yet*.' It was, therefore, just as well for the sake of family concord that Jack was allowed to set up for himself and hunt his own hounds in his own way, with none to hinder him. But though the two agreed to differ in their theories of sport, the old man was immensely proud of his handsome athletic son, and, undoubtedly, spoiled him.

On the 17th of August 1805, Jack Musters made the greatest mistake of his life. He married Mary Anne, the only daughter of George Chaworth of Annesley, and heiress to a great estate which bordered upon that of the Musters. Miss Chaworth was as beautiful as she was wealthy, and a romantic interest attaches to her name from the fact that she was the object of Lord Byron's early and passionate love. The Byrons and the Chaworths had been, previously to this, brought together in a tragic manner. Miss Chaworth's ancestor, William Chaworth, was killed in a duel by the fifth Lord Byron, under circumstances which led most people to believe that there had been foul play. They fought, alone without seconds, in a room in a tavern at Acton, and it was alleged that Chaworth, with his dying breath, accused Lord Byron of having taken such an unfair advantage of him as practically amounted to murder. The poet, when he first visited the Chaworths at Annesley, as a boy, had a superstitious fancy that the family portraits would come out from their frames to haunt the descendant of the duellist, and for a long while was afraid to sleep under the roof. But the fascination of Mary's society eventually overcame his superstition and he was a constant visitor. His passion for her he made no attempt to conceal, but Mary, who was two years his senior, only laughed at it as a boyish fancy. There she was mistaken, for the boy of fifteen was in such deadly earnest that to the day of his death he still cherished fondly the memory of the only woman whom he ever sincerely, deeply, and purely loved. He is described as being then 'a fat, bashful boy,' with nothing of that beauty of feature and charm of manner which afterwards made him the idol of all the women he met. Moreover, he was peculiarly sensitive on the subject of his lameness, and one day he unfortunately overheard Mary Chaworth say to her maid, who had spoken of Byron's evident passion for her: 'Do you think I could ever care anything for that lame boy?' The words cut him to the heart, and, though it was late at night, he darted out of the house and ran every step of the way to his home at Newstead Abbey, three miles away. From that moment Byron abandoned all hope of winning the heart of Mary Chaworth, though he never ceased to brood over the happiness of which he thought he had been robbed by her coldness to his suit. 'Our union,' he writes in his diary, 'would have healed feuds in which blood had been shed by our fathers—it would have joined lands broad and rich—it would have joined at least *one* heart and two persons not ill-matched in years (she is two years my elder) and—and—and—*what* has been the result?' In that touching and powerful poem 'The Dream,' wherein Byron lays bare his most sacred feelings, he says:—

> 'But she in these fond feelings had no share,
> Her sighs were not for him—to her he was
> Even as a brother—but no more.'

And the result? He answers that query thus:

> 'It was of a strange order that the doom
> Of these two creatures should be thus traced out
> Almost like a reality—the one
> To end in madness—both in misery.'

Mary Chaworth, however, had given her heart to handsome Jack Musters, who was as fine a specimen of a manly athletic young Englishman as any woman could wish to see, an accomplished dancer, gifted with a fine singing voice, and pronounced by the Prince Regent himself to be the most perfect gentleman he ever met.

What chance had the fat, bashful, lame boy against such a 'young Greek god?'

Whether Jack Musters knew of Byron's attachment to Miss Chaworth I cannot say—if he did, he probably regarded his rival with contemptuous pity, though he had reason to alter his opinion later, as I gather from the poet's description of his first meeting with his successful rival in love. It was at a dinner at Lord Jersey's place, and the details are prosaic enough. Musters, I should state, had taken his wife's name on his marriage. 'Chaworth the foxhunter,' writes Byron, 'nicknamed Cheek Chaworth, and I sweated the claret, being the only two who did so. Chaworth, who loved his bottle, and had no notion of meeting with a *bon vivant* in a scribbler, in making my eulogy to somebody one evening, summed it up, "By God, he drinks like a man."'

Some years later Byron dined with Mary Chaworth and her husband at Annesley, and was much affected at the sight of her little daughter. That his love and admiration for his idolised Mary had not abated may be surmised from what he said to one of his friends: 'I found in her all that my youthful fancy could paint of beautiful.'

Mary Chaworth's marriage, as I have already hinted, was not a happy one. Handsome Jack unfortunately had an ineradicable propensity to make love to every woman he met. His irregularities in this respect caused discord at home, which culminated in a separation from his wife, whose mind became subsequently affected to a degree which almost justified Byron's words, 'the one to end in madness.' Her end was tragic. During the riots which followed the rejection of the Reform Bill in 1831, a mob of Nottingham roughs attacked and sacked

Colwick Hall, where Mrs Musters (her husband had taken his own name again) and her daughter were then living. The terror-stricken mother and daughter were compelled to take refuge and shelter from the violence of the rioters in the shrubbery, where they lay hidden during a long cold November night. The shock and the exposure proved fatal to Mrs Musters; she died at Wiverton Hall in the following February, and so closed this dark page in Jack Musters' life.

Jack Musters' career as a Master of Hounds, if brilliant, was certainly erratic. He was one of those rolling stones that gather no moss. He never could settle down for any length of time in any hunting country, no matter how good it might be. When he became Squire of Annesley by his marriage to Miss Chaworth, he hunted his own hounds there for several seasons, and an excellent pack they were. An enthusiastic admirer of his describes him at that time as being 'top full of good nerves, a firm hand, a sure seat, and a constitution which could stand any amount of wear and tear, he could go across country well, and knew the run of and could kill a fox better than most huntsmen going.'

But Jack went the pace in other respects with a vengeance, and finding himself hard up, sold his horses and hounds in London. The splendid pack fetched a big price, and his favourite hunter, Brutus, was knocked down for 500 guineas.

The Squire of Annesley, however, was too fond of the sport to give it up entirely, and in 1818 he got together a scratch pack 'from everywhere and anywhere,' and a very unsteady lot they were, killing not only sheep but the deer in Colwick Park, despite all the efforts of Musters' men to restrain them. Yet in the end, Jack not only tamed them, but brought them to a state of absolute perfection. When he had thoroughly organised the pack, he took the Pytchley country, and showed good sport there, but soon threw up the mastership, and sold his hounds to Lord Middleton. Then he commenced a roving career, hunting in Lincolnshire and half-a-dozen other shires, but never staying long enough in any country to make his mark.

Jack Musters was a clever and successful breeder of hounds, and both in the field and in the kennel he was, 'The Druid' declares, 'the undisputed king of gentlemen huntsmen.'

The 'king of gentlemen huntsmen,' however, was occasionally given to playing tricks which the Hunt justly resented—especially as it was solely by the assistance of their subscriptions that he was able to hunt at all.

On one occasion, when the meet was at Wiverton, near or on the River Smite, then in flood and overflow, all the adjacent meadows being under water, he played the following prank :—A very large field was in attendance ; this he observed, and whispered to his whippers-in not to follow him over the bridge, but quietly to slink away to a given spot. He then took his pack, followed by the subscribers, over the bridge, when having gone a mile or more below it, he made his clever horse walk over an almost impassable foot-bridge, to aim at which he had to ride across three flooded fields by a way only known to himself. Having gained the side at which he had posted his whippers-in, leaving his thoroughly well-sold field staring in wild wonder at the manœuvre, he put his hounds into Skinner's covert, found immediately, and had a splendid run all to himself to Stobb Holts!

I have said that Musters was a splendid athlete.

He stood six feet, and could jump his own height. Of his prowess as a boxer, his old friend, Grantley Berkeley, gives the following illustration:—

On a lovely day at the close of one of those beautiful springs which used to usher in the summer, my friend strolled forth from Colwick Hall, with rod in hand, for some quiet amusement in the Trent.

The cool river lured our fisherman to bathe. Pausing for an instant to look at the state of the water, shouts and cries, the trampling of horses, and the clash and clink of martial sabre-sheaths, attracted his attention, and on the other side of the river he beheld the yeomanry at drill.

'Better day for that,' said Musters, 'than it is for fishing; I'll go and see the fun.'

He sat down on the grass, and immediately undressing, made his clothes and shoes into as tight and small a bundle as he could, binding them with the aid of a handkerchief upon his head and shoulders, and then slipped quietly into the river, there a hundred yards wide, more or less, and very rapid. Being an excellent swimmer, he soon did the distance and landed on the opposite bank, when he suddenly became aware of a huge bargeman or boatman standing close by, with his eyes and mouth wide open in speechless astonishment. He looked at the bargeman with a good-humoured inquiring sort of smile on his face, then said:—

'Now, my good fellow, the world's wide enough for both of us. I don't want you here; go on about your business, and I'll attend to mine.'

'Shan't,' was the rude reply. 'I'se as much right here as thou hast; an' I wonna go till oi loik.'

'Oh, very well,' said the squire very coolly, taking out his pocket-handkerchief to assist the sun in drying his handsome limbs. Without another word, and in no sort of hurry he completed his toilet, and stood up. 'I thought I told you to go away,' he said to the man, while he walked deliberately up to him, and put his clenched fist in his face.

'Dang it, if thot be it, I'll have ye,' was the response. Down went his cap, off went his jacket and shirt.

To it they went, and in an instant the straight, quick, lashing blow of Musters sent the boor upon his back. Up he got again, making a very wry face, but apparently nothing daunted, when a left and right dropped him on the grass again. The fellow now sat still, and murmured, 'Ye be the best man, zur, I acknowledges.'

Leaving his opponent on the grass an uglier if not a better man than he was before, the squire turned away quietly, and went to amuse himself with the yeomanry drill. When this happened, he must have been between thirty and forty, and therefore as good a man as ever he was.

Another remarkable athletic exploit which he performed is thus described by the Honourable Grantley Berkeley :—

'I have been told that he was one day going through Nottingham market, and came suddenly upon some sugar-casks set in a row, into every one of which he jumped in and out, without upsetting a cask, or coming to a mistake of any kind, much to the astonishment of the bystanders, who, from this display of power, were induced to deem the young squire would be a very awkward customer in a quarrel.

'He was not personally vain—by which I mean he was neither a dandy nor a coxcomb—but, for all that, he prided himself on some things, and was pleased with admiration, especially as regarded his personal prowess. One of the old tenants on the estate at Annesley had notice to quit his farm on account of its bad culture. The man, Houghton by name, not liking under the circumstances to face the squire, requested his brother to petition for leave to continue on the land; the brother replied with much confidence that he was "up to making it all right with the squire." Under this opinion, he proceeded to Annesley, and requested an interview; but Musters refused to grant it. In about three weeks' time, Houghton went again, when, on being perceived from the window, the squire refused to let him in, swore at him, and told him to be off about his business. Nothing daunted, Houghton in about a week's time returned to the charge, and when he called, a servant came and ordered him up into the squire's presence. It was with some expectation of being thrashed and then kicked downstairs that Houghton now came into the room; but, resolving to get in the first word, on what he knew to be the squire's weak point, instead of at once blurting out the real matter in hand, he exclaimed before he was well inside the door, "Please'y, squire, my son and I have had a bet loike about them sugar-casks. What was the depth and soize loike of they casks as y' jumped in and out of in our market-place?"

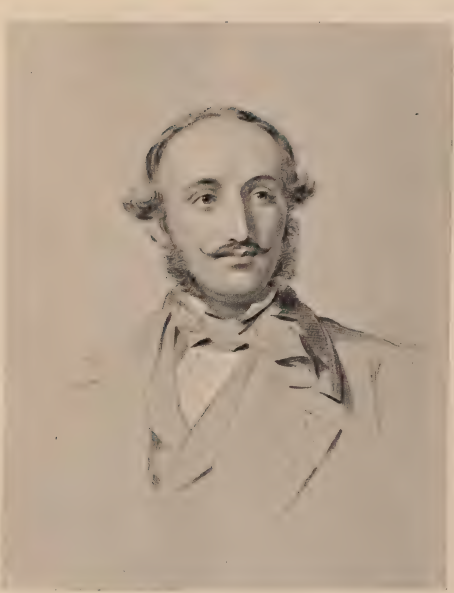
'The hit told, and instead of rough words or a kick downstairs, brandy and water was immediately ordered to be brought to refresh the crafty politician. At the close of the conversation the squire added: "Well, I suppose that idle rascally brother of yours must stay on his farm; you may tell him so. Good-bye!"'

In the drawing-room Jack Musters was distinguished for the refinement of his manners, and ladies always voted him 'delightful.' But in the hunting-field he flung politeness to the winds, and the language in which he blew up 'thrusters' who pressed too close upon his hounds was sultry to a degree, and sometimes passed the bounds allowed even to an angry Master of Foxhounds. As, for example, when he went for a lame clergyman who frequently came out for a day's hunting. 'There goes that damned parson. He's as deformed in his mind as he is in his body. He always rides over my hounds. The devil won't have him at any price.' And all this, remember, within hearing of the unfortunate parson, who may have been a nuisance, but hardly deserved such a coarse and sweeping anathema.

But people forgave handsome Jack Musters these little failings, for, with all his faults, he was a fine, manly English sportsman, frank and generous, with a big heart encased in as magnificent a body as was ever given to man. And when he died at Annesley Park on the 8th of September 1849, in the 73rd year of his age, he left more mourning friends than many a better man has had to lament his loss.

THE DUKES OF BEAUFORT.

THERE is a disposition in many quarters nowadays to 'smile at the claims of long descent,' for which no doubt the late Lord Tennyson is to a considerable degree responsible. And, with an aristocracy so largely composed of parvenus, the fiction of 'Norman blood' is pretty well played out. But, though such sentiments as 'kind hearts are more than coronets' are not less true than they are elevating, I confess to a weak-minded reverence for the glories of 'birth and state,' when they really bear the hall-mark of antiquity. For example, I can never look at the Duke of Beaufort when, in all the dignity of his Presidential office, he heads the meet of the Coaching Club or the Four-in-Hand Club at the Magazine in May, without a feeling of reverential awe, akin to that with which I gaze upon a thirteenth century gateway or the battered images in front of an old cathedral. 'There,' I say to myself with bated breath, 'sits a lineal descendant of the Plantagenets! The blood that flows in those aristocratic veins is the blood of the warrior-kings who won Crecy and Agincourt. Straight back to John of Gaunt, "time-honoured Lancaster," without a break, that handsome gentleman handling the ribbons can trace his pedigree!' The thought solemnises me; I feel at such



Beaufort

moments the full truth and force of those immortal lines of another living duke:—

> 'Let arts and commerce, laws and learning die
> But leave us still our old nobility.'

If ever (which heaven forefend!) our aristocracy should be threatened with extinction, I hope that some Society, similar to that for the 'Protection of Ancient Buildings,' will arise to preserve for us such venerable links with the past as the House of Beaufort. Let the new noblesse go by the board, if the people so wills—no one would miss it, but we cannot afford to lose our Plantagenets.

The present duke can trace one of his titles, that of Baron Botetourt, as far back as 1305, when John de Botetourt, a distinguished soldier and Admiral of the Fleet under Edward the First, was summoned by writ as a Baron to the Parliament which met on that date. The Earldom of Worcester dates from 1504, and was merged in the Marquisate created in 1642.

It is always interesting to trace back hereditary traits, and some of those which are conspicuous in the present Duke of Beaufort are at least as old as his ancestor, Edward, fourth Earl of Worcester, Master of the Horse under both Elizabeth and James the First, of whom one of his contemporaries tells us that 'he was a very fine gentleman and the best horseman and tilter of his time.' That is the first mention I have been able to find of the existence of those tastes and accomplishments which have since blossomed into that love of sport and that skill in horsemanship which are such brilliant characteristics of the Somersets of to-day.

The genius of the family was the fifth earl and first marquis, who is probably best known now as the author of a *Century of Invention*, in which he clearly foreshadowed the steam-engine, and showed that he had grasped the idea of the potentiality of steam as a motive power. But the first marquis was a gallant soldier as well as a great chemist and mechanician. He held Ragland Castle in Monmouthshire, then the family seat of the Somersets, with 800 men for nearly two years against the Parliamentarians, and, even when forced by Fairfax to surrender, was able to secure singularly favourable terms of capitulation. The Castle was dismantled and destroyed, and some idea of its size and grandeur may be gathered from the fact that the lead from the roofs alone fetched £6000. One way and another their adherence to the king's cause cost the Somersets upwards of £100,000, which may be reckoned as equivalent to nearly half-a-million in our present currency. Ragland Castle was never rebuilt, and thenceforward the home of the Somersets was at Badminton, the manor of which, with its noble park, had been purchased by Thomas, Viscount Somerset of Cashel, from Nicholas Boteler, the last representative of one of the oldest families in England.

The second Marquis of Worcester was created Duke of Beaufort in consideration, *inter alia*, so runs the patent, 'of his noble descent from King Edward the Third through John de Beaufort, eldest son of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, by Catherine Swinford his third wife.' The first duke celebrated his accession to ducal honours by building the present Badminton House, one of the finest mansions in Great Britain. Its grand Palladian colonnade gives it an imposing external appearance, but the splendour of its internal decorations is the great glory of the ancestral seat of the Dukes of Beaufort. Grinling Gibbons, the Great Master Carver to four English sovereigns from Charles II to George I, never did anything finer than the carving with which Badminton House is lavishly enriched and embellished. And the noble picture gallery contains masterpieces of Guido, Holbein, Cornelius Janssens, and Carlo Dolci, and, above all, that remarkable picture of Salvator Rosa's, which led to his expulsion from Rome. As one looks at it one is not surprised that the painter made the Imperial City too hot to hold him. For, he has represented in this wonderful piece of satire the European sovereigns of the time under the guise of eagle, wolf, sheep, fox, hog, cow, according as he conceived these animals to indicate the characters of the several monarchs; whilst he reserves his bitterest and most audacious shafts of satire for the Holy Father himself, for across the *ass* is thrown the pontifical pall. Over this heterogeneous group of beasts, Fortune, a blind goddess, hovers, and showers her gifts impartially on them all. In that noble mansion William the Third was entertained with princely magnificence on his triumphant return from the victorious campaign which ended with the Battle of the Boyne, and there, too, with not less splendid hospitality was welcomed his successor Queen Anne. What the power and state of the Dukes of Beaufort were then and long afterwards may be gathered from the vivid description given by Macaulay in the first volume of his history.

From that time the Dukes of Beaufort have been mainly remarkable for 'the sustained magnificence of their stately lives,' the splendour of their hospitality, the superb style in which they carry out their high ideal of sport, and the unselfishness with which they lay themselves out to provide enjoyment for all genuine lovers of the Chase. There were hounds at Badminton, no doubt, in the days of the first duke, but they were kept purely for stag-hunting, which was then deemed the highest form of the sport. It was by a mere accident, if the legend be true, that the discovery was made that the fox afforded more sport than the stag. In the year 1762, during the reign of the fifth duke, the hounds were passing through Silkwood, the covert there was drawn, a fox was found who gallantly faced the open and gave them such a capital run that the young duke was delighted, and from that moment the hounds were steadied from deer and encouraged to fox. But foxes were not plentiful enough then in the Badminton country to afford sport for a whole season, even at two days' hunting a week, and the sixth duke therefore rented Cornbury Park and subsequently Heythrop House in order to hunt that country alternately with his own. When, however, Heythrop House was completely destroyed by fire, the duke removed the kennels to Badminton, and, with Philip Payne as his huntsman, raised the Badminton Hunt to a celebrity which it has maintained ever since. The sixth duke was 'the good Lord' of the House of Somerset. No kindlier-hearted, more gentle, chivalrous, charitable, lovable man could have been found among his contemporaries. No one ever heard him utter a harsh word to any human being, but he could sometimes put such irony into his courtesy as made it serve the purpose of the most stinging rebuke. On one occasion when he was hunting the Heythrop country a reckless young Oxonian so pressed upon the hounds that they lost their fox. The duke rode up to the offender and taking off his hat, said, in his suavest manner, 'Sir, I have to thank you, and I beg every gentleman in the field will follow my example, take off their hats to you and thank you for spoiling a very good day's sport.'

The seventh duke enjoyed the reputation of being one of the handsomest men, and *the* most popular sportsman of his time. No one who ever had the pleasure of being in his society could forget his singularly fine and stately person and his perfect manners. He was a gallant soldier, too, and won distinction in the Peninsular War. While he was serving on Wellington's staff he had the misfortune to be captured by the French, but, after a few months as prisoner of war, he gained his freedom by exchange. For a short time he was a Junior Lord of the Admiralty, but soon abandoned office for the more congenial duties of a great landlord. As a coachman he was second to none, and his famous team of skewbalds was one of the sights of London. The Turf, too, had a share of his patronage, and his small but well-selected racing stud brought him some kudos on the race-course. Music and the drama had no more lavish and liberal supporter. It was largely owing to his generous subsidies that Italian Opera at Her Majesty's survived the evil days on which it had fallen, and was able to hold its own till public taste veered round again to its support. And many a thirsty soul on sweltering summer days has blessed his name for inventing the delightful cooling beverage which bears the honoured name of Badminton. The hereditary passion for the Chase was strong in him, and even when he was no longer able, from failing health, to ride to hounds, he came out and followed them in a light phaeton drawn by a pair of piebalds with postillion, an extra pair being in attendance with long traces to assist in rattling up the hills, whilst there were outriders to open gates, and, if necessary, pull down walls and fences, for His Grace was not one to be tamely content with mere road work, he was bent on being as well up with hounds as wheels could take him. So to the last he showed the indomitable spirit of his race.

At his death on the 17th of November 1853, he was succeeded by his son, Charles Henry Fitzroy Somerset, who now, as eighth Duke of Beaufort, is as popular in the world of society and sport as his father before him. I think there is no other noble family in England, unless it be the Spencers, in which hereditary traits have been so faithfully and continuously transmitted as among the Somersets. For 200 years the same tastes, the same peculiarities, the same motives in a more or less pronounced form, have characterised one duke after another. Even in their physical features may be traced a continuous resemblance, and it is hardly too much to suppose that the Somersets of the nineteenth century give us a very fair idea of the Plantagenets of the fourteenth.

Charles Henry Fitzroy Somerset, the eighth and present duke, is even more versatile than his father. His experiences have been varied indeed. A dashing cavalry officer, aide-de-camp to the Duke of Wellington and Viscount Harding, Member of Parliament for East Gloucestershire, High Steward of Bristol, Master of the Horse, Privy Councillor, Master of the Badminton Hounds, Member of the Jockey Club, President of the Four-in-Hand and Coaching Clubs, a generous patron of the Drama, a man about town of the first water—there is no fashionable circle of political, aristocratic, sporting or Bohemian society in which the present Duke of Beaufort has not been a conspicuous and popular figure. But it is as the

Worcester.

premier sportsman of England that he claims notice in these pages, and I am sure that if anyone ever deserved the title of a 'King of the Hunting-Field,' it is the noble Master of Badminton. My old colleague, the late Mr Nevill Fitt, for whose judgment in hunting matters I have the highest respect, thus strongly expressed *his* opinion of the duke's sportsmanship a few years back:

'No keener sportsman than the Duke of Beaufort, or better judge of hunting, ever went into a field. Will Long said of him that he was the best whip he ever saw, and knew better when to let hounds alone, and when to interfere with them; and I have myself seen him lose a good run rather than leave a young hound back in covert, while he is so keen that he would think nothing of finding a fox at half-past six in the evening of a spring day. As a coachman he is quite first-class; and he or the Marquis of Worcester works a team to covert on most hunting days; while a few years ago he was equally well known on the Turf, and had Siberia, Vauban, Kœnig, Birdhill, and other good horses; while he sets a good example to all landowners by keeping a stud-horse for the use of his tenants. Kingstown, who was second to Wild Dayrell, stood here for some years. He also had Grey Prince, the sire of some very good hunters, one grey especially being such a favourite of the duke's, that, when his legs got shaky, he used to have him conveyed to the meet in a van. This is the horse on which he is painted by Grant, facing the Duchess on Tetuan, which picture was presented to her in 1864.'

The Rev. 'Jack' Russell, whose qualification to give an opinion no hunting man will deny, declared that as a practical huntsman there were few, even among the best professionals he had ever known, who could hold a candle to the present Duke of Beaufort. And I remember hearing Mr Nevill Fitt relate, as an instance of the deep personal interest His Grace took in his pack, how he had himself once seen the duke pull up and go back after a young bitch, that was left running another fox in covert when the hounds went away, and bringing her up to them at a check long afterwards, thus for her sake sacrificing the best part of a fine hunting run.

At the time the hounds came into the present duke's possession they had attained a very high degree of proficiency under the care, first, of Philip Payne and, afterwards, of William Long. The former, who came from Cheshire to Badminton, introduced the celebrated New Forest 'Justice' as a sire, from whom sprang the well-known strain of 'badger pies' for which the Beaufort kennels have become famous. Indeed it passed into a saying in the Hunt 'that a Beaufort will never be happy without a badger-pied hound on the benches.' Will Long, who had been whip under Phil Payne since 1808, succeeded him as huntsman in 1825, and for nine-and-twenty years carried the horn till he was too old to discharge the arduous duties of the post. He was pensioned off with a comfortable cottage, a steady hunter, and a handsome annuity which he lived to enjoy for two-and-twenty years. Then the duke himself took the horn, and for three years showed splendid sport. There was no lack of foxes then in the Badminton country—enough to afford six days' hunting a week, and the condition of affairs was a strange contrast to that which prevailed half-a-century before, when the then duke, with but two days a week, had to eke out the scanty supply of foxes in his own country by taking over the Heythrop as a supplement. But the present duke had too many irons in the fire to enable him to give as much time as he wished to hunting his own hounds, and in the spring of 1858, when Mr Morrell gave up the Old Berkshire, His Grace snapped up that gentleman's excellent huntsman Tom Clark, who carried the Badminton horn for ten years.

On Clark's retirement in 1868 he was succeeded by the duke's eldest son, Henry Adelbert Wellington Fitzroy, Marquis of Worcester, who had just attained his majority, and had already shown himself a hard and fearless rider, and an enthusiastic lover of the 'crafte of venerie.' He had, in fact, taken to hunting as readily as a duck takes to water, from the day he first crossed a pony. 'Mayflower,' says a writer in *Baily's Magazine*, 'a little chestnut pony that passed through the family as instructor-general, giving each member in turn a dirty jacket by a rapid wheel, if hounds or greyhounds turned short, was his first mount; and under Tom Clark, who hunted the duke's hounds six days a week for ten years, and never during that period missed a day from cold or illness of any kind, he learnt a great deal. In the latter days of Clark's reign, Lord Worcester, who soon began to be known as a hard rider, had two very good horses, Methuselah and Stonemason, on either of which he was very difficult to beat; and so fond was he of the hounds as well as the sport, that there was but little surprise expressed when on Clark's retirement he took the horn. This was in 1868, and to say that he has carried it ever since, to the entire satisfaction of both field and farmers is to say comparatively little. His heart and soul are in the business of hunting; for that he comes out, and gossiping and coffee-housing find no favour in his eyes. He is splendidly mounted, a thing not easy to do, as he makes his horses subservient to his hounds; but as he generally has three of the former out, of course he can take liberties that a one-horse man cannot attempt. Lord Worcester is very good over the wall country, and generally has one or two nags with him equally good at that particular obstacle.'

From that day to this the Marquis of Worcester has devoted himself to hunting the Badminton hounds, dwelling among his own people and making himself popular all over the great country which he hunts with feudal magnificence. Perhaps the greatest feather in his cap during his career as master and huntsman, has been so far the famous run on 22nd February 1871, when they found a good, straight-necked fox in Grittenham wood, and ran him for three hours and a half over eight and twenty miles of country, in the course of which hounds swam the Thames, St Ives and its branches three times, not to mention such a trifle as the Harrington Brook. A giant in height, standing six feet four inches, the marquis is, with all his stature, wonderfully quick and active, as he has shown before now on the polo-ground, where the way in which he was wont to handle his pony in a 'bully' was worth going a long way to see. On the coach-box the marquis is 'the son of his father,' though not *quite* the equal of the duke, who has the reputation of being the only whip in England who can perform the remarkable feat of hitting, under the bars, the near leader, on the off-side, without touching the noses or ears of the wheelers.

The Badminton pack consists of seventy-five couples, and a well-known sporting writer thus enthusiastically describes it :

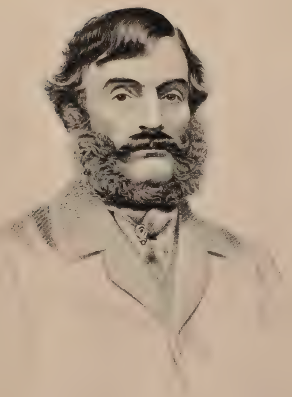
'I can find no better pack to represent the sport that is to be found in this part of the world than the Duke of Beaufort's, and I am sure that if a foreigner wished to see how fox-hunting was carried on to the greatest perfection, there is no place in England that would give him a better idea of it than Badminton, for assuredly everything is done there in the most princely style. It is now some years since I hunted in that country ; but when I did so, the order of the day was something after this fashion :—The first thing to attract a stranger's attention in the morning would be at least a dozen or fifteen hunters going forward to the meet, in the care of second horsemen and grooms, for the use of the duke, his guests, and the hunt servants. Somewhat later, the hound van would come on the scene, drawn by four mules, and driven by Jack West, the then head whip. Perhaps an hour after this the drag came to the door ; either the Duke or the Marquis of Worcester took the ribbons, and the coach was sure to be pretty well filled with such a load from the house as would have gladdened the heart of any public coachowner, amongst them generally being Tom Clark the huntsman, whom, as he then hunted six days a week (and they never make half days at Badminton), the duke took thus to covert and home again, when the fixture was at any distance, to lighten his arduous labours. That hunting hounds six days in the week is hard work no man knew better than His Grace. The team, when the journey to the meet was a long one (and the fixtures often ran fifteen miles and upwards ; for, where hounds can go six days a week, and be certain of a find, a large extent of ground must be covered), was, as a rule, changed half way, and a fresh one worked them to their destination, which was some hotel near the place of meeting. Here dry things, which were brought for every one, were left with the drag and hound van, and one and all started fresh for the sport. On their return, luncheon was laid out, and having, if needful, got rid of wet garments and refreshed themselves, all went home as comfortably as they had gone to covert. I need not point out what a wonderful help to hounds and men is such a liberal style of doing things in a country where trains serve them very little, if any; and one of the most amusing things I ever witnessed was to see the self-satisfied air with which the hounds trotted up into their van, as if they thoroughly appreciated (as no doubt they did) being carried comfortably home, instead of having to drag twenty miles through heavy dirty roads. There was no voice of authority wanted to get them into it. Fond as I personally am of change, could I select my own locality for hunting, there was no country I would sooner drop into than the Duke of Beaufort's, as, independent of the magnificent scale on which everything is conducted, the country itself affords so much variety. On the Severn side, and that next to the Vale of White Horse, they have grass country second only to the pastures of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. On the Bechampstead side they can race over downs as fine as any in England, often without a fence to throw a horse out of his stride; and in the intermediate portions you have a wall country which is exceedingly pleasant to ride over (at least for those who like walls). Here is change enough to suit any man, and there is scarcely any country in it that can be termed bad.'

In such splendid style does the Duke of Beaufort keep up his hunting establishment at Badminton, and such grand sport does he always afford that the popularity of the Hunt is extraordinary. The meets at any favourite fixture are as large as those of the Quorn or the Pytchley, and so full is the country of foxes that a long draw is a thing almost unknown. In no country does a better understanding exist with the farmers, who are devoted to the duke and the marquis, and it does not need the generous presents of game, which His Grace so liberally distributes, to stimulate the loyal feeling of the sportsmen who farm the lands over which the wearers of the blue and buff, as bold horsemen as any in England, follow 'Worcester' and his streaming pack.

CAPTAIN JOHN WHITE.

MELTON MOWBRAY, though still holding the proud title of 'The Metropolis of Hunting,' is a very different place now from what it was in the first three or four decades of the present century. Probably those who make it their headquarters during the hunting season would be deeply and justly offended if it were described as dull, but it certainly is far less lively, though, no doubt, much more decorous, than in the wild days when Captain John White and his chum Captain Maxse, Val Maher, Squire Osbaldeston, Horatio Ross, Lord Kennedy, Captain Douglas, Sir David Baird, the Marquis of Waterford, and others of the like kidney 'made things hum' there. A hard-riding, hard-drinking set they were, always ready for any devilment, or any deed of reckless daring, for no bolder spirits, no finer horsemen, no more enthusiastic sportsmen ever foregathered in any one spot on this earth from the days of Nimrod to our own.

Among the foremost of these madcaps was Captain John White, whose claim to a place among famous fox-hunters the following brief record of his exploits will, I think, satisfactorily establish. Coming of a good county family, John White was born at Dalesford in Cheshire in the year 1790, and was sent to school at



Eton, where he proved himself a very lively youngster indeed. But, even before he went to Eton, John White had shown that the love of horsemanship was born in him. His first essays in riding were on a pony, so small that, to quote his own words, 'with the saddle on him he used to walk under a leaping bar at home and be afterwards galloped over it.' At football and cricket young White soon made his mark at Eton, but of scholarship he acquired no more than was absolutely licked into him, which was probably about as much as the average healthy, athletic English schoolboy carries away with him nowadays.

From Eton, John White went to Christ Church, Oxford, and it was significant of his ideas as to what a university curriculum should be that he took three hunters up with him as a freshman, and it was said of him that, during his three years at *Alma Mater*, he never once missed a day with hounds when they met within anything like riding distance of Oxford.

When he finished his career as an undergraduate in 1811, John White took his small stud to Lincoln, where he had the good luck to drop in for George Osbaldeston's mastership of the Burton, and shared in all the splendid sport with which the squire signalised his five years' tenure of the horn in that country.

I think it was about this period that John White rode his first match on the flat. He had been dining in the company of Mr Walker, who then owned Mitchelgrove, where Mr Gratwicke afterwards trained, and that gentleman, after the wine had gone round merrily, talked so big about a certain horse of his, that White was irritated, and offered to match a hunting mare of his own, got by Patriot, against Mr Walker's wonderful horse for

500 guineas, owners up, at twelve stone. The next morning, on talking over the match with some of his friends who had been present, White came to the conclusion that he had made a fool of himself over night, and that his mare had no chance against Mr Walker's horse. He would gladly have backed out of the match, but his opponent would not hear of it, so John White had to stand by his bargain and make the best of it. It was arranged that the match should come off on the old Bibury course, and there the two met to decide the knotty point. Whether it were by the superiority of his mare or of his horsemanship I am not prepared to say, but at anyrate John White won easily, and proved himself a dashing and determined jockey.

In 1815 Mr John White moved to Melton Mowbray, and went in heart and soul for hunting.

Here the young sportsman soon made himself conspicuous. He and Captain Maxse, as wild and daring a spirit as himself, joined their forces, and set up an establishment which became known far and wide as 'Claret Lodge,' from the quantity of that noble wine consumed there. They boasted of possessing what White called 'the best dog-cook' in the place, and their dinners and suppers were such as Lucullus himself would have pronounced superb. For seven seasons these two, *par nobile fratrum*, kept house together and gave their friends rare entertainment, of a kind, perhaps, which would scarcely be considered 'good form' now, but was suited to the tastes of a generation which took its pleasures highly flavoured. They were full of blood and irrepressible animal spirits, the jolly, rollicking, reckless sportsmen of that heroic age, and had the one object of getting as much out of life, in its material and sensuous phases, as they could within the limit of three score and ten. But, with all their faults, they were *men*, and their nerve and dash in the hunting-field were at least as conspicuous as their prowess at the table.

Here, for example, is 'Nimrod's' tribute to John White: 'Captain White may be safely placed among the hardest and best riders of England; and, taken in the double capacity of a rider of races and a rider to hounds, is decidedly the very best. I consider him, indeed, the exemplar of horsemen, for he has every attribute. In addition to an elegant seat, he has fine hands, a quick eye, good temper, and undaunted nerve, despite the awful falls he has had. With hounds, it has been said, he has never been out in his life, whether he liked his horse or not, that he did not try to get to them. And it will be remembered he once played a duet with Mr Assheton Smith when every other man was beaten, viz., on that memorable Belvoir day when hounds ran nineteen miles point blank, as the song said—

"White on the right, sir, 'midst the first flight, sir,
Is quite out of sight of those in the rear."'

It was during his residence at Melton that Captain White performed one of his greatest feats of endurance. He went to meet Lord Lonsdale at a favourite covert close to Uffington, and had two capital runs, one of forty minutes, and the other of an hour and ten minutes, killing both their foxes. Having left off twenty miles from Melton, he rode back there, changed his things, and having had a cup of tea and a chop, he rode home, seventy-five miles, crossing the Peak of Derbyshire in a snowstorm, and reached Park Hall, where he resided, at eleven o'clock at night, having got over one hundred and fifty miles of country since his breakfast time.

Of falls no man except Assheton Smith had more; there was scarcely a bone in his body that had not been broken. On one occasion, when leading in a run from Whitnall Wood, he jumped into a pond grown over with green weeds, and Mr Warburton rode right on the top of him, and both were submerged. The captain was very much hurt; but by the aid of the Oldfield Lane doctor, a famous bonesetter, he recovered in three weeks, and came out again as cheery as a lark. But the worst fall he had was in his early days in Lincolnshire, when his horse fell back on him in a drain, the pommel of his saddle pounding in his chest-bone and three ribs, besides breaking his collar-bone, and smashing his ankle on getting out. This, with most people, would have led to an announcement that certain horses well-known in Lincolnshire were to be sold at Tattersalls', in consequence of the owner declining hunting. But the captain, as soon as out of the doctor's list, seemed determined to make up for it by riding harder than ever.

But perhaps the most characteristic anecdote of John White's nerve is the following given by 'Nimrod':—

'During the last year that Mr Thomas Assheton Smith hunted Leicestershire, he had a run of nineteen miles point blank, which is well known by the name of the Belvoir Day. It so happened that the pace was so good, and the country so severe, that no one was with the hounds towards the last except Mr Smith and Mr John White. It also happened that they came to a fence so strong and high, that there was only one place where it appeared at all practicable, and this was in the line Mr White was taking. The consequence was, Mr Smith was obliged to turn to this place, expecting to find Mr White well over; but instead of this, he found him what is called "well bull-finched," his horse and himself sticking fast in the hedge. "Get on," says Mr Smith. "I cannot," said Mr White, "I am fast." "Ram the spurs into him," exclaimed Mr Smith, "and pray get out of the way." "Damn it," said Mr White, "if you are in such a hurry, why don't you ride at me and charge me?" Mr Smith did charge him, and sent him and his horse into the next field, when away they went again as if nothing had happened.

'Those who know nothing of Mr White will naturally exclaim—surely this man will never give up hunting if he has the means to pursue it. Mr White has not been regularly to Melton for the last three or four years, but he told me a short time since that he should start again one of these days. He was three years there in Mr Smith's time, and seven with other masters of hounds; and I heard the very high compliment paid to him by a very excellent judge—namely, that he *never was out in his life, whether he liked his horse or not, that he did not try to get to hounds.* He is become very fond of the sod, and much devoted to shooting—preserving no less than forty thousand acres of ground; but I will answer for it he never laid a trap for a fox.'

It was unfortunate, perhaps, for his fame as a sportsman that he allowed a passion for the Turf at times to overmaster his love of the Chase, the nobler sport of the two. I am not concerned here with his exploits as a gentleman jockey, in which capacity he sweated himself as if his very life depended on success, and no professional knight of the pigskin worked so hard and indefatigably as this enthusiastic amateur. Yet strange to say, though as fine and fearless a cross-country rider as any in England, he had a supreme contempt for steeplechasing. It was on the flat that he loved to display his jockeyship; and, to show how conscientious he was in his efforts to keep down his weight, I may mention that on one occasion, having to get off 10 lbs. in order to ride a horse at Heaton Park Races, he went off on a tremendous sweating walk, and, when dead beat, fell in with a Scotch piper whom he engaged to cheer him up. With the piper before him playing vigorously, White came up the flower garden towards Lord Wilton's house, at which he was staying, and, 'faint but pursuing,' thus burst upon the gaze of the house party, who greeted him with roars of laughter.

As a cocker or patron of the 'sod' he had no superior in dash and enthusiasm. It was a time when cockfighting ranked high among aristocratic sports, and had its centre at the ancient city of Chester, where Lord Sefton, Mr Price of Brynprys, Squire Bold Haughton, and the celebrated Dr Audlem, were the 'Kings of the Cockpit,' with those famous rivals Gilliver and Potter as feeders. Here Captain White, with his renowned black-reds, always held his own and sometimes won very big stakes indeed.

In 1842 Captain White (he commanded a troop of Cheshire yeomanry, hence his military title) took his leave of Melton, where he was regarded as the 'last of the Mohicans,' and became the Master of the Cheshire hounds, when he showed such sport as even that sporting country had never seen before.

In 'Farmer Dobbin's Day with the Cheshire Fox Dugs,' written by Egerton Warburton, the poet laureate of the hunting-field at that time, he is thus hit off:—

'I seed that great commander in the saddle, Captain Whoit,
And the pack that thronged about him was indeed a gradely soight;
The dugs looked foine as satin, and himself as hard as nails,
And he gi'd the swells a caution not to ride upon their tails.
Says he, "Young men of Manchester and Liverpoo' come near,
I've just a word, a warning word, to whisper in your ear—
When starting from the cuvver should you see bold Reynard burst
We cannot 'ave no 'untin' if the gemmen go it first."'

If, however, the young men of Manchester and Liverpool failed to heed that deep sonorous word of warning, they soon had the 'big, big D's' rattling about their ears like a hailstorm.

But when Joe Maiden appeared on the scene as huntsman, Captain White retired. Two such master-minds were too much for one Hunt. They could not but be in perpetual collision. And so the captain went.

From that time he practically gave up the Chase for the Turf, though it was as an adviser rather than as an owner that he distinguished himself in that sport. He was associated first with Mr R. C. Naylor, of Macaroni fame, and afterwards with Lord Stamford, from whom he purchased Cambuscan and Archimedes at what were then thought sensational prices. 'It was a curious and suggestive sight,' says a once well-known sporting writer, 'to see him and his old friend Captain Percy Williams parading the Epsom paddocks at the heels of, and as the bodyguard of a Derby favourite, and we certainly preferred to see him at Newmarket, sitting erect on his pony and rousing up as he rattled over the Ring to lay another 100 for his party.' But I think his best friends would rather have seen him going in the first flight over the Leicestershire pastures or cheering Dick Christian on to 'keep the pace up.' The captain was one of Dick's heroes. 'Captain White was always for me,' said the famous rough-rider to the 'Druid'; 'he kept hardening me on. I don't think I'd ever have gone at such fences, but he had such a pleasant way with him, never done hollerin' at me, I couldn't help going a tickler.'

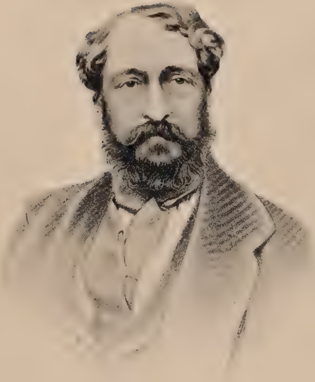
Captain White's resolution and decision of character stood him in good stead elsewhere than in the hunting-field. At the time of the Reform Riots of 1831, his troop of yeomanry was ordered out to quiet a disturbance in Derbyshire. The mob was so threatening that the Riot Act was read, and Captain White was ordered to disperse the rioters. Before charging, however, the captain rode out alone into the thick of the mob and cried in his stentorian voice, 'Look here, my lads, I want to give you one more chance before there's bloodshed. The Riot Act has been read, get away peaceably like sensible chaps. I don't want to kill my fellow-countrymen. But, by God! if you don't clear off, and I order my men to charge, I'll cut you down as if you were so many bloody Frenchmen, make no mistake about that. Now clear off.' And the mob *did* clear off. If you look at his portrait you will hardly wonder that they did so. It is not the face of a man who would stand being trifled with or would show much mercy if his blood were up.

He wore well, despite the hard life he had led. When he was seventy, he not only looked but was far more vigorous than nine men in ten who were twenty years younger. On seeing him in 1862, when he was in his seventy-third year, I should certainly not have taken him for more than fifty, and I was then told by those who knew him that he could still, like Yorick, 'keep the table on a roar' with his racy and vivacious talk, for he was an admirable *raconteur* till the very last. He was in his seventy-seventh year, when, in the month of February 1866, he died of dropsy, almost the last survivor, I suppose, of that race of intrepid spirits who were bred by the big wars of the eighteenth century, and helped England at a great crisis in her history to hold her own against a world in arms.

THE EARL OF WILTON.

WHEN, on Monday the 7th of March 1882, Thomas Egerton, second Earl of Wilton, passed away in the eighty-second year of his age, there was, I think, a general feeling that the final link which bound our generation to that galaxy of sportsmen which shed a lustre over five decades of this century was severed. Lord Wilton, the sometime 'Admirable Crichton,' the best all-round sportsman that England had seen since George Osbaldeston, was the last of that grand old school of which Sir Tatton Sykes, Lord George Bentinck, George Payne, General Peel, the Earl of Glasgow, and Admiral Rous, were such brilliant exemplars. But, distinguished as he was in many branches of sport, Lord Wilton was greatest in the hunting-field, and for that reason he deserves a high place in the Valhalla of the Chase.

The second son of the first Marquis of Westminster, by Eleanor, Lady Egerton, only surviving daughter of the first Earl of Wilton, the subject of my sketch was born at Millbank House, Westminster, on the 30th of December 1799. He was sent to school at Westminster, and completed his studies at Christ Church, Oxford. In 1814, whilst he was yet a boy at school, he inherited the title and estates of his maternal grandfather. Seven years later he took the name of Egerton, in place



Wilton

of Grosvenor, and married Lady Mary Margaret Stanley, the only surviving child of the marriage between the twelfth Earl of Derby, of racing renown, and Miss Farren, the celebrated actress.

At a very early period of his career Lord Wilton showed that he possessed in no common degree the hereditary love of racing for which the house of Grosvenor had so long been famous. Gifted by nature with a figure which enabled him to ride lighter than most gentlemen jockeys who were his contemporaries, Lord Wilton had advantages which few of his rivals enjoyed. He was a 'natural horseman,' and having enormous practice with his father's stud, soon developed into the most accomplished and skilful gentleman rider of his time. In 1827 he established at his seat near Manchester, the famous Heaton Park meeting, which was the chief arena of his exploits, and he won numberless races both there and at Croxton Park. 'On the first institution of Heaton Park Races,' says a late well-known sporting writer, 'the crowd of visitors was so great that after three o'clock in the afternoon the gates of the park were closed and every stratagem was adopted by the million to obtain admission. In consequence of the mischief that was thereby occasioned to the trees, an order was issued that in future no person should be admitted without a ticket, nor even then, unless coming on horseback or in a carriage. The amended measure hardly answered the expectations that were formed of it, as the Manchester folks argued, with their customary acuteness, that whatever vehicle would *carry* was of necessity a *carriage*, and therefore that their carts were admissible. This state of things continued till 1835, when professionals were allowed to ride with the gentlemen jockeys;

tickets of admission were dispensed with, and the meeting assumed larger proportions.'

In September 1839 the Heaton Park meeting was removed to Liverpool, to the great regret of the Manchester people, who regarded 'the Northern Goodwood' as the pleasantest gathering of the year. But I am not concerned here with Lord Wilton's career on the Turf. Let it suffice to say, that the three most famous horses he owned were Gladiator, Wenlock, and Seesaw. The first-named only started once, and that was for the Derby of 1836, when he ran second to Bay Middleton. He was the sire of Sweetmeat, and of the dam of the great Gladiateur, and grandsire of Macaroni, Cremorne, and Favonius. Wenlock won the St Leger of 1872, the only classic race ever placed to Lord Wilton's credit, over which he netted his largest stake in bets. Seesaw carried off the Cambridgeshire in 1868, and the Royal Hunt Cup in 1869.

But Lord Wilton did not confine his achievements to sport. His versatility was extraordinary. Sixty years ago, the noble earl, then in his thirty-ninth year, was thus described in the amusing 'Chaunt of Achilles,' written by Charles Sheridan, or as some say, Bernal Osborne, and supposed to give the views of the then newly-erected statue in Hyde Park on the persons who, during the year of Her Majesty's coronation, passed by on their way to the Row or the Drive:—

> 'Next, upon switch-tailed bay with wandering eye,
> Attenuated Wilton canters by,
> His character how difficult to know!
> A compound of psalm-tunes and tally-ho;
> A forward rider, half inclined to preach,
> Though less disposed to practice than to teach;
> An amorous lover with a saintly twist,
> And now a jockey, now an organist.'

These, however, by no means exhausted the category of Lord Wilton's accomplishments, for, not only did he play the anthem every Sunday during the season at the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, but he had also walked the hospitals and passed his examination as a master mariner. In fact, he was a really excellent surgeon and a first-rate seaman. That there was some ground for the satirical sneer at his attempt to combine piety with pleasure and the saint with the sportsman, I gather from the picture which that incorrigible gossip Fanny Kemble in her 'Record of a Girlhood' gives of the earl and countess at home, when she was their guest at Heaton Park in 1830. She writes: 'Our Sunday at Heaton terminated with much solemn propriety, by Lord W. reading aloud the evening prayers to the whole family, visitors and servants assembled, a ceremony which, combined with so much of the pomps and vanities of the world, gave me a pleasant feeling towards these people who live in the midst of them without forgetting better things.'

And again: 'Lord W., in spite of his character of a mere dissipated man of fashion, had an unusual taste for the knowledge of music, and had composed some that is not destitute of merit; he played well on the organ, and delighted in that noble instrument, a fine specimen of which adorned one of the drawing-rooms at Heaton. Moreover, he possessed an accomplishment of a very different order: a remarkable proficiency in anatomy, which he had studied very thoroughly. He had made himself enough of a practical surgeon on the occasion of the fatal accident which befell Mr Huskisson on the day of the opening of the railroad, to save that unfortunate gentleman from bleeding to death on the spot, by tying up the femoral artery which had been severed.'

Fanny Kemble was present on that memorable day when the first railway in England, from Manchester to Liverpool, the masterpiece of George Stephenson's genius, was opened, and witnessed the terrible accident to which she refers. Mr Huskisson, ex-President of the Board of Trade and a Cabinet Minister, was shaking hands with the Duke of Wellington at the door of one of the railway carriages when there was a cry that the engine was coming. Mr Huskisson stepped back, was knocked down by the engine (the famous 'Rocket'), and received injuries from which he died a few hours later. According to Fanny Kemble, Lord Wilton himself, who was standing with Count Batthyany talking to Mr Huskisson, had a very narrow escape indeed of sharing the awful fate of the statesman.

As Commodore of the Royal Yacht Club, Lord Wilton was a not less conspicuous and familiar figure at Cowes than at Newmarket or Melton, and that he was no mere fair-weather sailor he proved times without number by his long cruises in the *Palatine*, and other famous yachts which have carried his pennant. It has been suggested that the *sobriquet* of 'the wicked earl,' so incongruously applied to him, derived its origin from certain scandalous traditions attaching to his celebrated schooner, the *Zarifa*, which had been originally a slaver, and was supposed to retain something rakish and piratical about her which she imparted to her noble owner, whom some persons persisted in regarding as a sort of corsair Don Juan when afloat in that tainted craft. But, so far as I know, there was not the slightest ground for suspecting the highly moral and decorous nobleman, who was wont to read family prayers to his assembled household, of anything in common with the character of a reckless rover, either on sea or land.

But it is neither with Cowes nor Newmarket that the name of the Earl of Wilton is chiefly associated. For the latter half of his life, at any rate, the hunting-field claimed his warmest affection, and his happiest hours were passed in Melton Mowbray, of which he was justly styled the King. There it was that Lord Wilton was seen at his best, and in all the three kingdoms there was no hunting-box to compare in perfect finish with Egerton Lodge. It was indeed a regal establishment, where hospitality was dispensed with princely liberality. And in his capacity as host the earl was nobly assisted by his charming countess, who died in 1858, loved and respected by all classes as the very type and model of the perfect 'Lady Bountiful,' as charitable to the poor as she was hospitable to her equals—as much at home in her schools as in her drawing-room, and equally popular in both. Five years later the earl married, *en secondes noces*, Miss Elton Smith, who worthily maintained the reputation which her predecessor had won as *châtelaine* of Egerton Lodge.

As a rider to hounds Lord Wilton had no superior in his day. He was always in the first flight and was regarded as a perfect model of what a horseman should be in the hunting-field. One of his greatest gifts was a wonderful pair of hands. These stood him in good stead both on the racecourse and over the Leicestershire pastures. When he had the cream of the Whitewall riding as a gentleman jockey, he rode the great Touchstone in several races, and, though the horse pulled with John Day in the saddle harder than any animal that famous jockey ever rode, Lord Wilton could hold him almost with a pack-thread. It was the same with Lord Eglinton's Dr Caius, as vicious a horse as ever looked through a bridle, upon whom those crafty and brilliant horsemen, Tommy Lye, Job Marson, and Cartwright, had tried their prowess in vain. The touch of those wonderful hands of Lord Wilton's had a magic effect, and so exquisite was his manipulation of the ungenerous brute's mouth, that when he had steered him to victory, Tom Dawson, no mean judge, declared that there was not such another jockey in England.

It was to this exquisite sense of touch on the bit, which was the envy of all his rivals, that Lord Wilton owed the singular immunity from falls which marked his long career in the hunting-field. He was extremely partial to thoroughbreds, and his splendid stud always contained the cream of English hunters. From the memorable day when, on his thoroughbred stallion Thyrsis, he 'set' the whole field in that famous run from Sproxton Thorns with the Duke of Rutland's, he was ever the fugleman of the Meltonians. Like Henry of Navarre he might have said :—

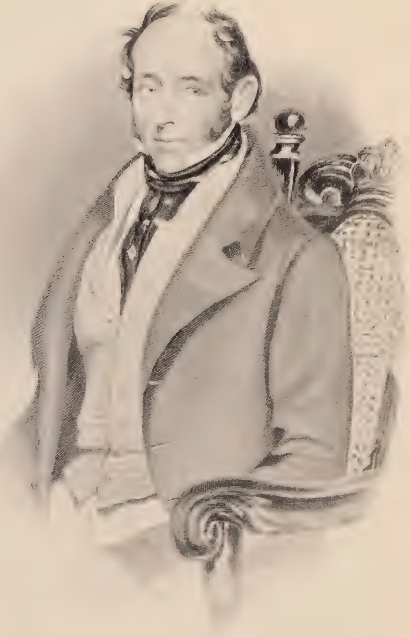
> 'Press where ye see my white plume shine, amidst the ranks of war,
> And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre.'

It was said of him that he knew every fence and field in Leicestershire, and his pluck and good judgment enabled him to hold his own in the hunting-field with the best, even after he had passed the span of three score and ten. Another invaluable gift which he possessed was that of getting well away, and 'stealing o'er the grass' before even the most alert of his rivals realised that 'the game was afoot.' No man better knew the value of a good start or was more determined to get it. He was not, indeed, a reckless rider, but he was a very jealous and a very crafty one. Some dunderheads who could not understand his style of riding questioned his pluck. 'Never saw him jump a gate in my life,' said a carping Quornite once. 'No,' retorted another, who knew the Wiltonian touch better, 'but you've seen him creep through the bars when you were half a mile behind.' Age did not seem to diminish his nerve or impair his wonderful hands. In 1863, when I more than once had the pleasure of seeing him ride to hounds, he went with all the spirit and dash of a youngster, though then in his sixty-fourth year.

It was only in harmony with 'the eternal fitness of things' that one of the best and hardest riders and one of the most enthusiastic lovers of the Chase that ever lived should breathe his last among the scenes most dear to him. Not many months before his death, when it was evident that his fourscore years had at last robbed his knees of that firm grip of the saddle for which he had been so long renowned, he said, whilst announcing his intention of spending some portion of each winter at Egerton Lodge: 'At least if I can no longer ride to hounds as of yore, I can die at the place which I love best on earth.' That wish was gratified, and his long life closed at Melton, hard by the scenes of many a hunting triumph.

Few men, probably, have ever extracted so much enjoyment out of existence, at any rate in its purely material pleasures, as Thomas Egerton, second Earl of Wilton. He possessed everything that could render the world enjoyable to him: perfect health, an ample fortune, troops of friends—and I can think of no better epitaph for him than the words inscribed, with far less significance, upon the tomb of a famous English satirist:—

> 'Life to the last enjoyed, here *Wilton* lies.'



Nimrod

'NIMROD.'

CHARLES JAMES APPERLEY

I AM sure that all educated English sportsmen, who have dipped into that monumental work *The National Dictionary of Biography*, will have shared my feelings of surprise and indignation on finding that two such familiar names as those of Charles James Apperley, 'Nimrod,' and Henry Hall Dixon, 'The Druid,' are absent from that Valhalla of British worthies. The reason is said to be that the first editor, Mr Leslie Stephen, had no sympathy with sport. And yet I seem to remember the time when Leslie Stephen's name was associated with sporting feats of a kind almost as eccentric as those of Jack Mytton. Trinity Hall men used to tell of his enthusiastic interest in their First Boat, and how he dashed into the Cam almost up to his neck to offer his frantic congratulations to the crew when they won the goal of their ambition and wrested from First Trinity the headship of the river. And who that saw it will ever forget that memorable afternoon at Fenner's, when the lean and wiry Don matched himself to walk two miles whilst Cadman of Peterhouse ran three, and when, in his excitement, the former shed his scanty garments till the spectators trembled lest he should breast the tape *in puris naturalibus!* In later years Mr Leslie Stephen was a famous and fearless Alpine climber. But I can hardly believe that when he abandoned that perilous pastime *all* sympathy with sport evaporated from him. And, therefore, I am the more perplexed at the omission of Charles James Apperley and Henry Hall Dixon from a work of which in other respects it would be impossible to speak too highly. It is true that, under Mr Sidney Lee's editorship, the later volumes have not been closed to the celebrated representatives of sport in various branches. But how George Borrow, for example, would have marvelled to see the names of pugilists like Tom Paddock and the 'Tipton Slasher' figuring in a *Dictionary of Biography*, which contains no reference to the immortal Jem Belcher, 'The Napoleon of the Prize Ring!' But enough, *liberavi animam meam*, and there's an end of it. I will now to the more congenial task of showing how worthy of a place in any bead-roll of English notabilities are the two writers whose names have been omitted from the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Charles James Apperley, known to all students of the literature of sport by his pseudonym of 'Nimrod,' was the second son of Thomas Apperley, who came of a good old Hertfordshire family, though he had early pitched his tent at Plasgronow in Denbighshire, where the future journalist was born in 1778.

Of his father, 'Nimrod' says that he was the author of a volume of 'Moral Essays,' 'he corresponded with Dr Johnson, read Greek before breakfast, and being himself a scholar, he fondly hoped he should have made one of me, but in the weakness of his affection being unable to say "No," he suffered me to follow foxhounds in a red coat and cap, like Puss-in-Boots, before I was twelve years old.'

These scholastic attainments procured for Mr Thomas Apperley, the post of tutor to the Sir Watkin Williams Wynn of the period at a salary of £500 a year, and with his pupil he did the Grand Tour just before the outbreak of the French Revolution. His two sons were sent to Rugby, then under the head-mastership of Dr James. In his autobiographical sketch, 'Life and Times of "Nimrod,"' which appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, the author gives a vivid description of Rugby School as it was in his day. 'A loose place, and especially so as to drinking, in which some boys indulged to great excess.'

In that memorable 'Ninety-eight' which Irishmen have just celebrated in characteristic fashion, young Apperley played an active part. He had joined Sir Watkin Wynn's regiment of yeomanry, which was despatched to Ireland to assist in quelling the rebellion, and acquitted itself so vigorously as to earn from the exasperated rebels the nickname of 'The Bloody Britons.' The way in which on one occasion they charged through a blazing village gained for the men the admiration and congratulation of the commander-in-chief, who was a witness of the daring feat. So severe were the losses of the regiment, that in less than eighteen months, 'Nimrod,' who joined as youngest cornet, had risen to be senior lieutenant. But perhaps the less said the better about the incidents of that ignoble and fratricidal strife.

At the age of two and twenty 'Nimrod' took to himself a wife, the daughter of Mr William Wynn of Penarth, Merionethshire, a cousin of Sir Watkin. The lady had a comfortable dowry, enough, her husband thought, with his talents as a horsebreaker to enable him to live in the style of a country gentleman. They started housekeeping at Hinckley in Leicestershire, where

Apperley made his first acquaintance with the Quorn, then under the mastership of Hugo Meynell. Next he set up his establishment at Bilton Hall, about a mile out of Rugby, a house famous as having been for some time the residence of Joseph Addison, after his marriage to the Countess of Warwick. It is but a few months since the venerable mistress of Bilton Hall, Miss Bridgeman Simpson, died at the age of ninety-one. She claimed to be a descendant of Addison, and amongst the treasures of the old Hall which she and her sister delighted to show to visitors, was a replica of the famous Vandyck portrait of Charles the First, on the white horse. Bilton is one of the most charming villages in Warwickshire, and even in 'Nimrod's' day was within comparatively easy range of three of the best packs of hounds in England, the Quorn, the Pytchley, and what was then known as the Warwickshire. In 'Nimrod's' time, he says the rookery was one of the largest in Great Britain, but some twenty years ago the rooks deserted the place. Here Charles James Apperley lived in good style, and made a comfortable income by selling the horses which he had himself trained as hunters.

'At that time,' writes a frequent visitor at Bilton Hall, '"Nimrod" was one of the most fascinating persons I ever saw. His figure was the perfection of lightness, grace, and activity, his features handsome, his complexion clear, his hair dark and curly, his eyes sparkling with humour and intelligence. He was truly a sunny person, always prompt to oblige, full of harmless good-natured fun, and very ready in conversation, with observation of character, and the sort of descriptive power that has since been recognised in his writings.'

But 'Nimrod' was not only a fine, bold horseman in the hunting-field, he was also one of the best gentlemen jockeys of his day. When he and Mr Richard Tattersall went on a tour together through Germany, Apperley, though then fifty years of age, wasted from eleven stone seven pounds to ten stone three pounds, in order to ride for the gold cup at Dobberau, which he won on Wildfire; and when he had the honour of being presented in his cap and jacket to the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg as the hero of the meeting, he, with chivalrous gallantry, begged her to accept the cup. She graciously received the gift, invited the bold horseman to dinner, and before he left the country made him a present of an exact facsimile of the trophy he had won. It was a curious interchange of courtesies, savouring more of the days of chivalry than of our own prosaic times, but it is significant of the favourable impression created by the handsome Englishman.

'Nimrod,' however, was of an improvident nature: he soon found that Bilton Hall was too expensive a place to be kept up on his precarious income, and in 1808 he migrated to Bitterley Court, Salop, where he was content with a more modest establishment. About this time, too, he became a Captain in the Notts Militia. Handicapped by his early marriage and his increasing family, he was at his wits' end to know how to support himself and those dependent on him. He had left Shropshire and was at Brewood in Staffordshire, when he bethought himself of trying his hand at authorship. He commenced a book on fox-hunting, a subject on which he justly thought himself well qualified to write, and showed the first few chapters to a friend, whose advice to him was to abandon the idea, as a book on the lines he proposed would have no chance of success. 'Nimrod' took the advice and threw the manuscript into the fire.

It was not till five years later, in 1822, that he made his next timid step in authorship. He sent an article on 'Fox-hunting in Leicestershire' to the *Sporting Magazine*, then under the editorship of Mr Pittman. The contribution was promptly accepted, and Pittman, recognising that he had found the very man he wanted, engaged him permanently on the staff, supplying him with three first-class hunters and a groom in order that his contributor might cut a proper figure in the hunting-field. The popularity of 'Nimrod's' 'Hunting Tours' was extraordinary—the circulation of the *Sporting Magazine* was soon trebled, and the payment that the author received was princely. I doubt whether any writer, sporting or other, has ever been paid at such a high rate for contributions to a magazine as 'Nimrod' was. He is said to have received as much as TWENTY POUNDS PER PAGE for his articles in the *Sporting Magazine*. This, I imagine, means that his hunting expenses and salary amounted to a sum equivalent to £20 a page. But, for three or four years at any rate, 'Nimrod's' income must have exceeded £3000 a year, though in later days his magazine pay was but a guinea per page.

The 'Hunting Tours' were a novelty in sporting literature, and though at first they were not altogether popular with masters of hounds, who resented even the kindliest and gentlest criticism of their establishments, yet eventually they were hailed with genuine pleasure by everyone who took any interest in hunting. For 'Nimrod' had two qualifications for his task which made him both liked and respected. In the first place, he was a gentleman, well-bred, courteous, and of charming manners. In the second place, there was no better judge of a horse or a hound in the three kingdoms. His criticisms therefore carried weight, and as they were never unkindly, they created no ill-feeling against the critic. Nevertheless, there was a flutter, not altogether pleasant, in every Hunt when it was known that the great 'Nimrod' was about to pay them a visit. The Master and the 'field' were alike keenly anxious to receive a favourable verdict from the renowned critic. There was a general furbishing up all round; the hunt-servants were rigged out in new clothes; the best horses, the neatest boots and breeches, were brought out to meet that dreaded judicial eye. Everyone was on his best behaviour, and I think there must have been a sigh of relief all round when the ordeal was over, and it only remained to be seen what the great Dictator would have to say in the next issue of the Magazine. Perhaps some grumbled at having been put to expense to please the 'chiel amang them takin' notes,' but a word of praise from 'Nimrod' in print—and he was generous with his eulogy—was enough to compensate for any outlay.

No one before or since has exercised such an influence over the hunting-field as 'Nimrod' did. And then his articles were such pleasant and lively reading. No wonder that he attained a popularity which none of his successors can ever hope to attain, write they never so charmingly.

But unfortunately for 'Nimrod' his staunch friend Pittman died in 1830, and it was found after his death that his affairs were hopelessly involved. He had made large loans to 'Nimrod,' which the latter was pressed by the creditors to repay. The *Sporting Magazine* was sold with its debts, and Apperley being wholly unable to meet the demands upon him, fled to Calais, whence he did not return till twelve years later, when the most exacting of his creditors were dead.

Meanwhile Messrs Ackerman, the well-known sporting print-sellers, started the *Sporting Review* in opposition to the *Sporting Magazine*, and secured the services of 'Nimrod,' who, however, wrote nothing for the new venture comparable to his 'Hunting Tours.' But the seal was set to 'Nimrod's' fame when in 1838 John Gibson Lockhart, son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott, was happily inspired to invite Apperley to write for the *Quarterly Review.* 'Nimrod's' three famous articles in the *Quarterly* on the Turf, the Chase, and the Road created a perfect *furore* at the time. 'I have found a man,' wrote Lockhart enthusiastically to John Murray, 'who can hunt like Hugo Meynell and write like Walter Scott.' And even at this distance of time one can read those essays with pleasure. It is generally admitted that the *Turf* article is inferior to the other two, for the reason that the author trusted largely to second-hand information and was not altogether at home with his subject. But the essays on 'The Chase' and 'The Road' are in every way admirable, for he had a thorough practical knowledge of both subjects. In his later days he was one of the best whips in England, and was frequently taken for a professional coachman, so expert and scientific was his handling of the ribbons. For these essays he received 170 guineas, and for four of a similar character in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 280 guineas. As a specimen of 'Nimrod' at his best, I know of nothing better than the famous description of a run with the Quorn, which still stands unrivalled in hunting literature

Many writers have attempted to imitate it, some, notably Whyte Melville, with success, but it must always be remembered that 'Nimrod' was first in the field. Like Homer, he was neither hampered nor helped by any previous gleaners in the same stubbles. Others may take him as their exemplar, but he was the original creator.

In the three *Quarterly Review* articles 'Nimrod' reached his high-water mark, and upon them no doubt his claim to literary distinction mainly rests in the eyes of 'the general,' but the sportsman will find in his 'Hunting Tours' and 'Hunting Reminiscences' matter as lively, racy and entertaining as ever came from the pen of any writer on sport.

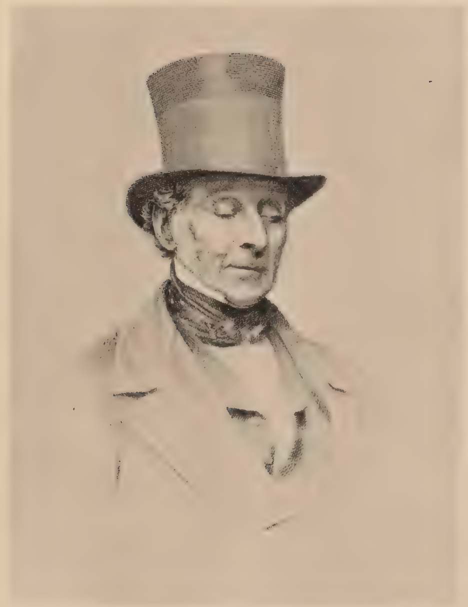
On the 19th of May, 1843, Charles James Apperley died at his residence, Belgrave Square, Pimlico, in the sixty-fifth year of his age, leaving behind him sons who inherited his passion for sport. One of them, Colonel William Wynn Apperley, greatly distinguished himself in India, not only as a mighty *shikarri*, but also as head of the large government military studs, where, both as a buyer and breeder of horses, his services were invaluable.

There are grandsons, too, of 'Nimrod' now living who have distinguished themselves on the polo-ground, on the race-course and in the hunting-field.

'THE OTHER TOM SMITH.'

IT is probable that at this moment there is scarcely a decent-sized village in England in which there are not at least two Thomas Smiths. Nevertheless, it is a curious and confusing coincidence that there should have been two distinguished Masters of Hounds of that name, not only contemporaries but residents in the same county, and both, to add to this confusion, men of exceptionally original and independent character. Of Thomas Assheton Smith, the famous Master and founder of the Tedworth, I have already discoursed, but I am not at all sure that 'the other Tom Smith' with whom I am now about to deal, is not equally deserving of fame. On that point, however, I shall leave the reader to judge for himself after perusing the following narrative of the man's remarkable career.

Thomas Smith, sometimes called by way of distinction 'Hambledon,' sometimes 'Gentleman' Smith, but best known perhaps as 'the other Tom Smith,' was born at Shalton Lodge, near Alton, Hants, on the 3rd of August 1790. His father was a gentleman farmer of modest estate, and Tom was the eldest of nine sons, all of whom were early made to understand that they had to push their own way in the world. Thomas, being apparently a lad of parts, was sent, on the recommendation of Dr Reynolds, Dean of Winchester, a friend of the family, to



Thos Smith

Eton, whence it was intended that he should proceed to Oxford with a view to taking clerical orders. But Tom Smith, whilst undoubtedly endowed with good natural abilities, showed such a decided preference for sport over scholarship, that his father, himself an enthusiastic sportsman and a bold rider to hounds, recognised that the Church was not Tom's vocation, and wisely abandoned the intention of making his eldest son a parson.

Young Smith's early life seems to have been mostly spent in narrow escapes from death. He was left once suspended by one arm from the roof of his father's cart-house at a distance of over thirty feet from the ground, owing to the ladder, on which he had climbed up to get a sparrow's nest, slipping away from under him. But he had the presence of mind to sidle along from rafter to rafter, till he reached a waggon half full of hay, into which he dropped.

On another occasion his head got in the way of a sportsman aiming at a rabbit, and down went Tom, apparently dead. He recovered, however, but his escape from death was marvellous, for a full charge of shot was taken out of his head and afterwards shown to him in a wine glass.

At the time when Napoleon's threatened invasion of England sent a great wave of patriotism surging over the country, Tom Smith was bitten with military ambition, and at thirteen was in a cadet corps of volunteers, whilst two years later he became an ensign in his father's company of the Loyal Hampshire Fencibles. From that moment Thomas Smith was so keen to enter the army that his father promised to use all his influence to procure him a commission. And a soldier Tom would certainly have become had not his father's sudden death quite altered the course of his life. Finding his mother left but scantily provided for, with twelve orphan children dependent upon her, Tom, like a good honest English lad and a dutiful son, gave up his cherished hope of a military career and took charge of his father's farm.

Passionately fond of hunting, but unable to afford a mount, Tom was indebted to a friend for his first introduction to the Hampshire Hunt, of which the great John Warde was then Master. The friend was sweet upon Tom's sister, and finding 'metal more attractive' than fox-hunting at Shalton Lodge, urged Tom to take his two hunters and groom, for he was a young man of fortune, and have a week's sport with the Hampshire Hunt. Thomas jumped at the offer and made his first proper appearance in the hunting-field, in full fig and excellently mounted. Then it was that he made the acquaintance of John Warde, whose proud boast it was in after life, when stories of his young friend's prowess reached his ears—'I entered Tom Smith to hounds.' And never, surely, had pupil better master, or master apter pupil.

But it was with the Hambledon Hounds that Thomas Smith began his hunting career, and it was with them that, after brilliant successes in the Shires and elsewhere, he finally closed his long and honourable connection with the Chase. Hambledon, as all cricketers know, claims to have been the cradle of cricket, and in those days Hambledon men were as keen for the willow as the pigskin. Tom Smith was as much at home at the wicket as in the saddle, and therefore was hailed as an ideal Secretary of the Hunt.

But he had qualities which fitted him for a higher post than that of secretary, and these the Committee of the Hunt were not slow to discover. In the year 1821 George Osbaldeston, then in the first flush of his fame, came over to hunt the Hambledon country. But 'the Squire' was not the man for a slow woodland country. He was all for dash and go—had not the patience to appreciate the niceties of wood-craft—was too fond of the showy side of hunting to adapt himself to a country in which there is more scope for the science than the sport of fox-hunting. So, after an unsatisfactory season, he left Hampshire for the more congenial sphere of the Quorn. Then that fine all-round sportsman Sir Bellingham Graham, on resigning the Pytchley, decided to try his luck with the Hambledon.

'What is the subscription?' he asked. 'Seven hundred pounds,' was the reply. 'Scarcely enough to keep me in spur straps and blacking,' said he contemptuously. However, he gave the country a short trial, but it suited him no better than it did 'the Squire,' and he soon left, to be succeeded by Mr Walker, who in his turn gave up the horn to Mr Shand. When the last-named resigned, Tom Smith was by unanimous consent invited to take the Mastership. He was proud to accept the post, and showed such sport as the country had never known before. In the preface to his capital book, *Extracts from the Diary of a Huntsman*, he refers with pardonable pride to the fact that in the worst-scenting country in England he had killed ninety foxes in as many days. His enthusiasm for the sport was extraordinary, but what was still more remarkable about him was his marvellous and unrivalled knowledge of the habits and instincts of the fox. He seemed to know by intuition exactly what a fox would do, and what line he would take the moment he broke covert. He might have been brought up among the wild creatures of the woodlands, like Rudyard Kipling's 'Mowgli,' so intimate was his acquaintance with their ways. It used to be said of him, it was not the hounds that found a fox, but Tom Smith who found it for them, and, having found, hunted it for them also. 'If I were a fox,' said Mr Codrington of the New Forest, 'I would sooner have a pack of hounds behind me than Tom Smith with a stick in his hand.'

Critics said that he was not an elegant horseman, that his seat in the saddle was too loose. But even 'Nimrod,' who objected to his methods of hunting, and did not admire his horsemanship, was compelled to admit that 'on a middling nag he had few equals.' And as he never had a long purse at his command, it was very seldom that Tom Smith rode anything but a 'middling nag.' But the man who could ride at and clear a park wall, six feet two-and-a-half inches on the taking-off side and eight feet on the landing side, as he did when Master of the Craven, could have had few equals as a horseman on any kind of nag.

As an instance of his courage and dash, take the following feat on his horse the General :—

The Hambledon hounds met at St Margaret's, near Titchfield, found on Mr Delmé's rough ground, and shortly ran to the wide river between Titchfield and the Southampton Water. The bridge was a mile-and-a-half distant; and therefore Mr Smith swam his horse across close after the hounds, as did also Captain Yorke. When about half-way across they found their horses sinking, with only their heads out of water. They therefore slipped off their backs and swam to the shore, when the

General turned down the stream, and swam strongly as if going out to Spithead; but seeing nothing but water and boats before him, he changed his mind, tacked about as he passed a shallow creek, and stuck his fore feet firmly into the muddy bank. Captain Yorke's horse followed him to the shore. In a short time the whipper-in (who with the rest had gone round by the bridge) arrived, and gave the Master his horse. Mr Smith and the Captain then dashed off after the hounds, and killed their fox near Titchfield Common, whilst the whipper-in was hauling poor General out of the mud.

There were some carriages on the common, and the fox was given to the hounds close to them. One of the company asked Mr Smith whether he was not very cold and wet. To which he replied, 'Neither, but I have some water in my boots;' and holding up his foot, the water poured out as from a bucket, and steaming as if from a teakettle. This was in the depth of winter.

But Tom Smith, like 'the Squire' and many other good fox-hunters, was also 'a bad one to beat' in the ball-room.

Whenever the hounds hunted in the neighbourhood of South Stoneham, Mr Fleming made a point of inviting Tom to pass the preceding night at his hospitable mansion. On one occasion there was a fancy ball at the house, and the amiable hostess promised to open the ball with him on condition that he would wear a Scotch dress. He did so; but when the time came he found the dance was to be the galop, which he had never practised nor even heard of. It was too late to hold back then, so he went to work trusting to the chapter of accidents. In a minute his partner cried, 'Why, you don't know the galop!' 'No,' he replied; 'only in the hunting-field.' Nevertheless he found the time so well marked by the music that he proved an apt pupil; and ere the dance was over, Mrs Fleming said, 'Now you do it as well as any of them.'

He was, indeed, passionately fond of dancing, and on one occasion, when he was Vice-President of the Agricultural Show at Winchester, he rode eighteen miles to a ball at Henley Park, near Guildford, danced till 4 A.M., then rode straight off to Winchester, forty miles, and turned up as fresh and smiling at the opening of the Show as if he had lain snugly between the sheets all night.

At Mr Fleming's house Tom Smith often had the pleasure of meeting Lord Palmerston, of whom he used to tell this anecdote. His lordship was in the field one day, when a fox was found at Bittern, which ran straight to the water at Bursledon, but did not cross; he turned short back by Botley to Bittern, where he ran to ground with the hounds close to his brush. All the horses had had enough, and all left immediately except Lord Palmerston, who appeared anxious that the fox should be got out, saying that the hounds deserved to have him. He was told that it would be a long job, as the soil was sandy, and the fox could dig as fast as men could. 'Never mind,' was the reply; 'I will stay and help to the end.' His horse was accordingly sent to a farm stable, and all hands dug away as long as daylight lasted: then lanterns were got; at a quarter to eleven the fox was got out, after which the future Premier had a ride of fourteen miles to Broadlands Park. The explanation of his anxiety was that his horse was entered for the Hampshire Hunt Cup, to qualify for which it was necessary that he should have been in at the death of three foxes—and this made the third.

On resigning the Mastership of the Hambledon, Tom Smith hunted the Craven country, and it was there that 'Nimrod' saw him, and whilst, as I have said, objecting to his method of hunting, was compelled to admit that he was an extraordinary huntsman and could kill foxes with any man in England. Then came the crucial test of Tom Smith's ability as a Master. He was asked to succeed Lord Chesterfield with the Pytchley.

Of his lordship's reign it may be said that, magnificent though the style was in which he hunted the country, and courteous and genial as he personally was, his mastership was far from being a complete success. Surrounded by men who delighted to turn night into day, and who neither in manners nor habits suited the idiosyncrasies of the country gentlemen, the hunting atmosphere absorbed a taint which soon began to make itself felt. Late to bed meant late to rise, and so great was the unpunctuality of the meets that a feeling of dissatisfaction grew to be universal. To be kept waiting upwards of an hour for the Master was calculated to provoke impatience, if not anger; but when the delay was caused by the non-arrival of *one* (Nelly Holmes, afterwards Lady Rivers), who, though afterwards a lady of title, was at no time an ornament to the social *morale*, the burden was no longer to be endured. And Lord Chesterfield, who was quick to take a hint, promptly announced his intention of resigning. What happened thereupon is thus narrated by Mr Nethercote, in his interesting 'History of the Pytchley Hunt.'

'After the resignation of Lord Chesterfield, the Pytchley country went a-begging for several months, and it was not until late in the season that Mr T. "Gentleman" Smith, of the Craven Hunt, was induced by the liberality of Lord Cardigan to assume the Mastership. It was no light matter to follow such a prince as the Lord of Bretby in such a country as the Pytchley; but, confident in his ability to show sport, Mr Smith ventured upon the responsibility of getting an establishment together. The new chief was preceded by a great reputation acquired in Berkshire and elsewhere, and in no way did he belie it. A more thorough master of the "noble science," or one whose thoughts were more completely engrossed in the ways of "fox and hounds," probably never carried a horn.

Living *en garçon* in Brixworth, with Jack Goddard as first and Jones as second whip, he contrived to get a great deal of successful work out of the worst lot of hounds and horses that had ever been seen in the Pytchley country. The former were a part of Lord Chesterfield's pack, purchased by the Hunt for £400, after twenty couple had been selected by Derry and sent to Lord Ducie, which, it was said, were all hanged from being so incorrigibly wild! With hounds such as these, and horses varying in value from £60 to £20, there was an amount of sport during these two seasons which had not been approached during the splendid reign of Mr Smith's predecessor. A fine and powerful horseman, the animal he rode, however valueless in appearance, was bound to be pretty near hounds — "pace, not fences" brought the hounds to the only real difficulty. So delighted was Lord Cardigan said to be at the close of an excellent run, that he is reported to have fairly embraced the skilful huntsman who had been the means of causing him so much pleasure. The subscriptions not being sufficient to enable Mr Smith to hunt four days a week and meet the difficulties of a weak establishment, at the close of his second season he resigned office; and, for the seventh time in ten years, the Pytchley were seeking a new Master.'

On leaving the Pytchley, Tom Smith devoted some months to visiting all the most noted kennels of England, and then, in company with his wife and his intimate friend Baron Rothschild, went for a prolonged tour on the Continent. When he returned home he was asked once more to take the Mastership of the Hambledon. He consented to do so, and hunted the country until he gave up the horn for good in 1852, being then in his sixty-third year. His 'good-bye day,' April 3rd, 1852, was a memorable one. They met at Broad Halfpenny Down. There was a large and brilliant field, and 'fair women and brave men' crowded round the popular Master, after a clipping fifty minutes with a kill, to congratulate him on such a worthy finish to his long career as a Master and to bid him their affectionate farewells. Subsequently the members of the Hunt showed their high appreciation of the sport he had afforded them, in more substantial fashion by the presentation of a magnificent piece of plate; and so Tom Smith made his exit as a M.F.H.

But he continued to hunt for many a long day afterwards, and astonished the Badminton, the Berkeley, the H.H., and a dozen other Hunts by his wonderful feats in the saddle as a septuagenarian. It was his boast that he had reduced falling to a science, and probably he had had in his day as many falls as his famous namesake Thomas Assheton Smith. Yet they seemed to do him no harm, and of his toughness and pluck the following is a good example. In November 1866, when he was over seventy-six years of age, he was out with the Hampshire

Hunt, and in the midst of a quick thing, whilst swerving to avoid a horseman who had come to grief at a fence in front of him, he struck against the branch of a tree, was knocked backwards over the tail of his horse, and fell heavily on his back and shoulders. For a moment he was stunned, and when he was lifted up was evidently in great pain, but he insisted on remounting, and after a draught of vinegar, from a flask of that acid liquor which he always carried in cases of accidents, rode on to the finish. 'It is contrary to my practice to go home after a fall,' he said to those who urged him strongly to leave the field. 'I've always found that it is best after a spill to keep the blood in circulation by riding.' So he went resolutely on, and was in at the death of the second fox they killed. But subsequent examination proved that three of his ribs were broken.

The worst accident, however, that befel him was not in the hunting-field but on the railway. On a dark night he stepped out of the train without noticing that it had stopped before reaching the platform. He fell on the rails, and was picked up senseless, with both collar bones broken. Yet, as soon as he recovered consciousness, he declined to allow himself to be put to bed at the house of a friend to which he had been carried, but insisted on being driven in his own pony carriage over the rutty country lanes to his own home, eight miles distant; he said the jolting kept the blood from congealing!

As a crowning tribute to his sterling qualities, Tom Smith was elected High Sheriff of Hampshire, and worthily filled the post. For his talents were not by any means confined to the hunting-field. It was he who first proposed the scheme of a Thames Embankment, and his plan, which embraced an open-air railway along the causeway, is still extant. He was the inventor, too, of a locomotive ironclad battery—a cupola-shaped affair armed with heavy guns and mounted on wheels, which would enable it to be transported without difficulty from point to point of the coast, a sort of moving Martello tower, in fact. The invention was exhibited to the Queen at Osborne in 1866, and Her Majesty was much struck with its ingenuity. On the subject of the utilisation of sewage Tom Smith was also an authority, and indeed, as a scientific agriculturist, his opinion was always listened to with respect.

That he could write fluently and racily is proved by his 'Life of a Fox,' and his 'Extracts from the Diary of a Huntsman.' The former is a capital *brochure*, lively, humorous, and admirably illustrative of his wonderful knowledge of the nature and habits of the animals he hunted. Delmè Radcliffe has fallen foul of some of the theories propounded in Smith's 'Diary of a Huntsman,' and no doubt some of them are open to criticism. But for the most part his views are sound, sensible, and admirably expressed. The interest of these works is enhanced by the author's illustrations, for he was no mean artist, and, it is believed, has the distinction of being the only man who ever painted a whole Hunt, sixty-five portraits of men and horses.

It happened in this way. He was riding to Hinton House, the place of meet, along with Mr G. Richards, when from the opposite hill he saw the whole party grouped before the house. It was a dull frosty day; but a gleam of sunshine suddenly broke through, and it occurred to him that this was a good subject for a picture. At a glance he took in the whole scene; and he retained it so thoroughly in his mind, that, though he was late home after the run to Allington, he commenced his work immediately after dinner. He worked on, hour after hour, until five the next morning, and then he had finished the picture which hangs in the dining-room at Fir Hill. Almost incredible as it may seem, he never once touched a single figure of man or horse again; and yet, so exact are the likenesses that every one can be identified. The Hunt wished to have the picture engraved, but Mr Smith declined such an honour. It was, however, after all, engraved without his knowledge.

Mr Thomas Smith had a great belief in the capabilities of fox-hunters as light cavalry, and his enthusiastic efforts to put his theory into practice resulted in the formation of the 1st Hants Light Horse. He was seventy-five years of age when that corps was founded, yet old as he was he set them an example in shooting which even the youngest member had difficulty in following. For, this wonderful old man, with the short rifle supplied to the corps, at nine hundred yards made twelve bull's eyes in twenty-one shots, and never missed the target once! That was a feat of which even Captain Horatio Ross need not have been ashamed.

It is odd that neither the editor of the *Field*, nor any other hunting authority I have consulted, is able to give me the date of Mr Thomas Smith's death, and my own researches have been equally unsuccessful.

Coventry

MASTERS OF THE ROYAL BUCKHOUNDS.

ONCE a year the general public is permitted to gaze upon the Master of the Royal Hunt, as in all the glory of green and gold, he heads the Royal Procession at Ascot races. But those who hunt with 'the Queen's,' of course, have many opportunities during the season of gazing upon this remarkable functionary, who to the ordinary Philistine appears such an anomalous survival of a state of society as extinct as the dodo.

'The intelligent foreigner,' and for the matter of that, the intelligent native as well, wonders why the Royal Buckhounds should exist at all, and wonders still more why the Mastership of a pack of hounds should carry with it political office. It is, no doubt, but a humble place in the Ministry that the Master of the Buckhounds holds, but still he *is*, by right of his Mastership, one of Her Majesty's Ministers, and he holds his post only so long as his party is in power. His duties comprise the control of the Royal Hunt and the charge of the Royal enclosure at Ascot. It was expected when Mr Gladstone came into office in 1892, that he would abolish the Buckhounds. His attention was called to the matter, and he stated, through his secretary, that, as all arrangements had been made, it was impossible to disestablish the Royal Hunt that year, but the subject should have his close consideration. Lord Ribblesdale, who accepted the Mastership at that time, has recently given an amusing account of the 'suicidal conditions' on which he took office, for he was appointed on the understanding that he was to prepare all who were connected with the Royal Hunt for their latter end. The Buckhounds, he was told, were doomed ; the country would not tolerate them any longer, and it was to be his business to 'commit the happy despatch.' But threatened men proverbially live long, and this thought, no doubt, influenced Lord Ribblesdale in accepting the appointment. 'I made up my mind very quickly,' he says, 'that the office and the responsibilities would be entirely to my liking. Ascot Races and the terrors of the Royal Enclosure were in a reassuring distance. Forest hunting, on the other hand, was already beckoning to me in the near and inviting foreground. After going through the stables at Cumberland Lodge with Lord Coventry, the most helpful and entertaining of predecessors, on a glorious day in August, and just making acquaintance with the hounds, the sun-bathed kennel green, the wisteria in heavy bloom against the yellow brick of the hack stables, I determined that life was sweet and that I would die hard.' But after all, to die was not required of him, for the hand which did not hesitate to pull down the Irish Church paused in its iconoclastic zeal before so venerable an institution as the Royal Buckhounds.

And certainly, if antiquity be a valid plea for preservation, the Royal Buckhounds are entitled to the full benefit of that plea. For they have indeed 'a smack of age' about them, 'a relish of the saltness of time.' Those who have read Mr J. P. Hore's 'History of the Royal Buckhounds,' or the learned disquisition by Mr Edward

Burrowes, which forms the introduction to Lord Ribblesdale's entertaining gossip on 'The Queen's Hounds,' are aware of the great antiquity of this department of the Royal Household. But as neither of those works—the one from its erudition, the other from its costliness—is likely to find perusal among the general public, I hope I may be pardoned for giving here a brief sketch of the origin and history of the Royal Buckhounds and their Masters.

The office was originally hereditary, but when it was first created is a question which neither Mr Hore nor Mr Burrowes seems able to answer satisfactorily. Osborne Lovell, Chamberlain to Henry II, appears to have been the first Master of whom there is any record, and the conditions of his tenure of 'Hunter's Manor,' in the parish of Little Weldon, Northamptonshire, were that he and his heirs should keep the King's hounds. 'Custos canum' is the phrase used in the oldest deed extant relating to this tenure, and the learned authorities I have referred to are at variance as to the meaning of the words — whether 'custos' is equivalent to 'Master,' or merely implies the duties of a huntsman. That is a point I am not competent to discuss, and, if I were, the discussion would be out of place here. The Lovells intermarried with the de Borhuntes, and the latter family, through this intermarriage, became hereditary Masters of the Buckhounds, until Mary de Borhunte, heiress of the family titles and estates, married Sir Bernard Brocas, who by right of his wife became hereditary Master of the Buckhounds. The Brocas were an ancient Gascon House, deriving their name from a village which still exists, and Sir Bernard came over to England in the reign of Edward II. For 300 years they held 'Hunter's Manor' and the hereditary Mastership of the Buckhounds. The first payment to the Master recorded in the Pipe Rolls of Surrey and Sussex, bears the date 1362-3, and the entry is to the effect that, 'To Bernard Brocas, Keeper of the King's Buckhounds, is granted by the King twelve pence a day for his wages, and three farthings a day for meat for each of the "24 running dogs and 6 greyhounds" which formed his charge. His assistants received respectively two pence and a penny halfpenny per diem as wages. If we take the penny of that day as representing pretty much the purchasing power of the shilling of our own time, it will appear that the cost of the Hunt would be something equivalent to £750, or possibly £1000 per annum nowadays.

The second Sir Bernard Brocas was one of the two Masters of the Buckhounds whose fate has been tragic. He was Chamberlain to Anne, the Queen Consort of Richard II, the gentle lady for whom Shakespeare has enlisted our sympathies in some of the most pathetic scenes he ever imagined. Sir Bernard's fidelity to his royal mistress cost him his life, for he joined the conspiracy of nobles and bishops under Lord John Holland to restore the deposed King, and, being taken in the act of armed rebellion against Henry of Bolingbroke, was beheaded at Westminster in January 1400.

In the reign of Henry VIII the King's Privy Buckhounds were started, and there was a constant conflict between the Masters of this pack and the hereditary Masters of the old pack, which did not end until Thomas Brocas sold to Sir Lewis Watson the Manor of Little Weldon or Hunter's Manor in 1633, and with that sale there passed the hereditary Mastership, which, however, the Watsons do not appear to have claimed.

The first Master of the Privy or Household Buckhounds was the ill-starred George Boleyn, Viscount Rochford, whose name is mixed up with one of the foulest scandals in English history. Like the rest of his family, George Boleyn was not hampered in his actions by any scruples of honour or morality. He took it as a piece of good luck that his mother and his eldest sister should, by the sacrifice of their chastity, have won the King's favour, and when his younger sister played her cards so well as to inveigle the monarch into matrimony, he saw that his future was made. One good thing after another fell to his lot, and among them the Mastership of the Buckhounds, for which he was eminently qualified, for he was a bold horseman and a keen sportsman. A handsome and gallant youth he was, too, with a pretty gift of verse. But the luck of the Boleyns was short-lived.

George was implicated in the horrible charges brought against his sister Anne. Whether he were guilty or not we shall never know, but it is certain that he died on the scaffold with words on his lips which appeared to the spectators to be, if not a confession, at any rate something very nearly approaching it. There is a legend which, for the credit of human nature, one is loth to believe, that Henry, on the morning of Anne Boleyn's execution, was out with his huntsman and the buckhounds at Pleshet, near Eastham, in Epping Forest; that he stood there on a knoll waiting eagerly to hear the signal gun from the Tower which should announce the death of his faithless queen, and that the instant the boom of the cannon reached his ears, he cried, 'Ha! ha! The deed is done. Uncouple the hounds, and let us follow the sport.'

Another notable Master of the Buckhounds was Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whose handsome person and engaging manners won the heart, and very nearly the hand, of bluff Harry's

'Man-minded offset, who rose
To chase the deer at five.'

He had great opportunities, and he made good use of them. For, on the death of Queen Mary, he rode over to Hatfield to break the news to Elizabeth, mounted on a snow-white steed, "being well-skilled in riding a managed horse," and what with his horsemanship and his good looks he made a deep impression on the young Queen, always susceptible to manly beauty, and the more so because her sister's jealousy and hatred had long kept her in strict seclusion. Queen Bess's idea of hunting was not a very sportsmanlike one from all accounts. She would have a number of deer driven up and down inside a netted space in front of a well-screened butt; when comfortably seated, Her Majesty took pot shots at the game with her arblast or cross-bow. This was occasionally varied by coursing the deer with hounds, something in the fashion of the trapped-hare coursing meetings in suburban enclosures, which some five-and-twenty years ago excited public indignation.

The story of Leicester's career is too well known to need recapitulation here. The latest historians incline to the belief that he was innocent of the murder of his wife, Amy Robsart, but, even admitting that she died by her own act, there can be no doubt that it was her husband's cruelty and neglect that drove her to suicide. In the interests of poetic justice one could wish that the story were true which assigns his own death to accidental poisoning at the hands of his third wife.

The Master of the Buckhounds must have had a busy time in the reign of James I, for King Jamie had a craze for hunting. Tame enough sport it must have been to our notions. Here is an example. On the King's progress from Edinburgh to London, after his accession in 1603, I read in a contemporary account given in Nichols' *Royal Progresses*—'The 22nd day (April) being Fryday His Majestie departed from New-warke hunting all the way toward Bever Castle.' What the hunting consisted of is explained further on, where it is stated that Sir John Harrington of Exton Hall entertained the King at dinner and 'provided train scents and live haires in baskets, that being carried to the heath made excellent sport for his Majestie, Sir John's best houndes with good mouths following the game, the King taking great leisure and pleasure in the same.'

But I will do James the justice to say that he often indulged in more exciting sport. Was it not while he was hunting a buck in Greenwich Park that young Nigel Olifaunt came upon him, just as the hounds had run into their quarry and none but the King was in at the death? But His Majesty was hardly what you would call a daring horseman. He was fastened into his padded and quilted saddle like a two-year-old child on a donkey, and could not have fallen off if he had tried. Still, he loved 'the art of venerie,' and for that I am willing to forgive him even his 'Counterblast against Tobacco,' though in his hatred of the 'soothing weed' he would have had the countenance of such good sportsmen as Jack Musters, the Rev. Jack Russell, George Payne, and Hugo Meynell.

It is not till the reign of James II that I find a Master of the Buckhounds who is at all a prominent figure. Colonel James Grahame, or Grahme as he himself always spelt his name, who held the office under the last of the Stuarts, was a person of some consequence, whose letters have been preserved. In the interesting little monograph on him by Mr Joscelin Bagot, there is a portrait which represents him as a person of grave and melancholy countenance. He is described, however, as being tall and handsome, and Horace Walpole tells us that he was a noted man of fashion in his day, with a reputation for dry humour. He was certainly a keen sportsman, and next, perhaps, to his passion for gardening, loved to turn his hounds on to an outlying buck. He was on intimate terms with James after the Revolution, but this did not prevent him from making his peace with William of Orange, under whom he retained his Mastership of the Buckhounds. He died at the ripe age of eighty. His wonderful gardens at his estate of Levens near Kendal, with their hedges of box and yew cut into a hundred different fantastic shapes, their elaborate flower-beds, their grottos and sundials, their trim walks and terraces, still remain as one of the few examples of the Italian style of gardening left in England.

Good-natured, portly Queen Anne, with her red hair and rubicund face, was as enamoured of the chase as Queen Bess, and though her great bulk forbade her riding to hounds, she had a high-wheeled curricle built for her, in which she used to tear after the hounds at a break-neck pace through the drives of Windsor forest, to the dismay of the hapless courtiers who tried to follow her. Ladies patronised the Royal Hunt extensively in her reign and that of her successor. Their garb was so masculine that Dicky Steele tells us in *The Spectator*, how, meeting one of these dashing Amazons, he mistook her for a man. To the waist her costume differed in no point from that of his own sex, but she had not the courage to go the whole animal, like the wearers of the 'rational dress' to-day, and tamely ended in a petticoat.

It was to this fact that one of Lord Lexington's daughters, according to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, owed her marriage to a bishop. For, in taking a fence, the fair horsewoman was upset into a ditch. The bishop, being the only person near, rushed to her rescue, and, adds Lady Mary maliciously, 'found the display of her charms so irresistible' that he proposed to her the next day. From which I gather that the petticoat had, in episcopal eyes, an advantage over the masculine garment.

Pope, describing his meeting the Prince with all the Maids of Honour coming from hunting, passes these uncomplimentary remarks upon the womenfolk: 'To eat Westphalia ham in the morning, ride over hedges and ditches on borrowed hacks, come home in the heat of the day with a fever and (what is a hundred times worse) with a red mark on the forehead from an uneasy hat! All this may qualify them to make excellent wives for fox-hunters, and bear an abundancy of ruddy-faced children.' Clearly this was not the sort of woman that commended herself to the taste of the spiteful and fastidious little poet of Twickenham.

In George the Second's time, and for sixty years afterwards, the sum devoted annually to the maintenance of the Royal Buckhounds was £2314. Out of this the Master had to defray all his expenses; and his duties, besides hunting, included the distributing of the King's Plates at the various race meetings all over the kingdom, the feeding of the wild turkeys at Windsor, and the management of the Royal Menagerie in Hyde Park. The first two Georges were no great sportsmen, and that 'naughty little Mahomet,' as Thackeray calls him, the second George, seemed to have had little consideration for the lives and limbs of his hunt servants, to judge from the following anecdote. When the Royal Buckhounds were out one day in Bushey Park, one of the groom's horses took fright at the sudden appearance of a swan, bolted, impaled itself on some spikes, and was killed. Lady Suffolk, who was present, exclaimed, 'It's lucky the man was not hurt.' Whereupon the King turned upon her snappishly. 'Yes,' he said, 'I am very lucky truly! Pray where is the luck! I have lost a good horse, and I have a booby of a groom still to keep.'

There were ugly hangers-on to the Royal Hunt in those days, in the shape of highwaymen, who became so audacious in their demands to 'stand and deliver,' that when Lord Tankerville was Master of the Buckhounds in 1733, he went out hunting with an escort of Life Guards to protect him.

Ralph Jenison, M.P., deserves a word of mention as Master of the Buckhounds, for several reasons. In the first place, he twice held the office, a unique distinction up to that time; secondly, he was the only Master who ever received a pension, £2000 a year being granted to him on his retirement; thirdly, he is the only Master of whom a portrait in the green and gold uniform of the Royal Hunt has come down to us, that portrait being by the great Sir Joshua; fourthly, he was the last commoner who held the office.

For the rest, Ralph Jenison was an excellent all-round sportsman, an ardent patron of the Turf, and one of the original members of the Jockey Club. In those days the Master had Swinley Lodge in Windsor Forest as a hunting-box, and had a special allowance of £300 a year to provide breakfasts for the followers of the Hunt. Being himself a five-bottle man, Jenison made a jolly host, and there were some 'rare doin's o' nichts' at Swinley Lodge in his time.

George the Third was extremely fond of hunting, but it may be guessed that a run with the Buckhounds was rather slow work in his day, seeing that hounds were perpetually being stopped to let the King get up with them, for he is said to have ridden nearly nineteen stone. Still, he was an enthusiast, and would follow hounds all day without any refreshment. Once when a long run had taken him to Aldermaston, some miles beyond Reading, he journeyed home in a butcher's cart, holding affable conversation with the butcher all the way.

In 1813 Charles Davis, who, as Lord Ribblesdale says, is 'the great tradition of the Royal Pack,' on the break up of the Old Charlton pack at Goodwood, went to the Ascot kennels as first whip to Sharpe, whose daughter Davis afterwards married. In 1822 Charles was appointed huntsman, and the Prince Regent, who in his early days, before he grew too fat for the saddle, rode well to hounds, and had had many a good run with Davis and the Old Charlton, thus congratulated him on the appointment: 'It delights me to hear that you have got the hounds. I hope you'll get them so fast that they'll run away from everybody.'

Charles Davis was a great huntsman. 'His hounds,' says Dr Croft, who was as well qualified to judge as any man of his day, 'in a forest were as perfect and close hunters as harriers. They were left to depend on themselves, and so required but little assistance. "Let them alone" were his words to the whips at a check. . . . If his temper were hasty it was over and soon forgotten. He was a perfect gentleman in appearance, manner and conversation. . . . His hounds appeared to love him, and one of the prettiest parts of the day was, when a check occurred, to see them fly to his call and him take them to a holloa and plant them on the line of scent.'

After forty years' service with them, Davis thought his own pack the fastest in England, and certainly it would have been hard to find any hounds that could have beaten the famous run with the stag 'Richmond Trump' on the 13th of March 1832, when they ran twenty miles in exactly an hour! On that occasion, Davis, who, though he stood six feet one inch, only scaled nine stone two pounds, and was mounted on a horse (Clipper), well up to sixteen stone, had most of the run all to himself. The way in which he took 'Richmond Trump' that day showed his indomitable pluck. He rolled with the stag into a ditch and lay there, with his arm round the beast's neck, till assistance arrived. His skill and knack in taking deer were indeed extraordinary. On another occasion one who was present says he saw Charles Davis jump off in a narrow lane as the tired stag was coming up it slowly, with the hounds all round it, let the stag half pass him, catch its horns with his left hand, and swinging his whip round with his right hand, keep the hounds at bay and hold the stag till some one came to help him.

Once Davis tried a curious experiment. Here is the entry in his diary relating to it: 'May 2, 1829. Turned out *an elk* at Swinley; he hobbled away—I could not call it running—for half-an-hour, and I took him at Bagshot. The hounds would not hunt him.'

FRANK GOODALL.

His gaunt, thin frame and lank, hollow cheeks gave him the appearance of an ascetic. And, indeed, he lived almost as frugally as a hermit. One day he said to Lord Rosslyn, 'I hope you will excuse me, my lord, if I do not ride hard to-day.' 'Why, what's the matter?' asked the Master. 'If you please, my lord, I allowed myself to be persuaded to take a bit of pheasant last night at supper. It was rather *high* and has disagreed with me.'

A very grave, serious man, of a deeply religious turn, was Charles Davis, with not a spark of jollity about him. But, for all his Puritanic ways, he was a fine horseman and a grand huntsman. He ruled his hounds by love rather than fear, but he had them under the most perfect control. An eye-witness tells how once, when running up a grass lane, hounds got view of the stag. Davis galloped along the hedge-side of the field, jumped into the lane in front of the hounds, drew his horse across the way, and held his whip out at arm's length; though in full cry, the hounds stopped dead short, and not one of them attempted to pass till he lowered his whip. Was there ever a finer illustration of superb discipline than that!

In 1866 Davis had a severe fall, and hurt his leg so badly that he asked leave to resign. He was then in his seventy-sixth year, and had been forty years with the Buckhounds. His resignation was accepted, and Harry King succeeded him. But the veteran did not long survive his retirement from the post he had so long and honourably filled. He died at Ascot on the 26th of October 1867. Harry King in his turn was succeeded by the well-known Frank Goodall, who, I am glad to say, is still living in the enjoyment of well-earned repose.

Of a family of famous huntsmen, Frank is one of the most distinguished. His first appearance in the hunting-field was as second horseman to Tom Wingfield, huntsman to old Mr Drake, and he first donned scarlet on the 1st of May 1851, the day of the opening of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, when he entered the service of Mr Lumley, then Master of the Grove, under Will Merry as huntsman. Frank says that he well remembers his father driving him over to Bletchley station, and how the tears stood in the old man's eyes as he bade his son farewell, with the words: 'My boy, you are now going into the world to make either a man or a mouse.' Of the two, Frank elected to make the former. His experience has been varied. He was with Lord Portsmouth, with the Vine under George Turner and with Mr Oakley, as first whip; and hunted the Meath, Sir Watkin Wynn's, the Cottesmore, and Mr Tailby's. For nine years he was huntsman to the last-named noted sportsman, and he has a big album full of portraits of the Leicestershire hunting men, whose esteem and respect, both in public and private, he most deservedly gained.

From Mr Tailby's Frank Goodall went to the Queen's in 1872, and Lord Ribblesdale pays him this high tribute: 'Goodall was quite undefeated over the biggest country in England. When huntsman to Mr Tailby, he held the position, in the estimation of those most competent to form an opinion in his day, equivalent to that held by Tom Firr now. His style of riding compared favourably with that of Charles Davis and Jem Mason in their best days. He rode over a country with the same care which characterised these two fine horsemen.' Let me give one or two extracts from Goodall's Letters and Diaries in illustration of his adventures by flood and field. Speaking of one of his mishaps, he says: 'I got a regular ducking riding over a wooden bridge at Hamper Hill. My horse Resslyn slipt on one side and came upon his back on the top of me, and in the struggle my spur got caught in the stirrup and he dragged me down the brook for fifty yards, when luckily my spur leather broke and let me at large. Although I felt very much shaken I went on and did my duty and rode home twenty-five miles in wet clothes.' Unfortunately, whilst Frank was still suffering from the effects of that fall, and was rendered unpresentable by a black eye and bruised face, the Queen paid a surprise visit to the kennels. 'Her Majesty,' he writes, 'went all over the kennels, taking great interest in the hounds and in every detail.'

Here is another interesting item from Goodall's Diary: 'November 27th, 1877. The Prince Imperial was out to-day. He rode my favourite mare Countess, and I led the hounds and left them at Lord Salisbury's at Hatfield for the night. I came home by train, wet through to the skin.' Who that saw the young Prince riding that day so fearlessly and well, for he was a good horseman with a better seat than even his father, who was seen at his best on horseback, could have dreamed that within two years he was to die an ignominious death at the hands of savages in a quarrel with which he had not the remotest personal interest or concern!

Frank Goodall retired from the post of Queen's huntsman in 1888, and was succeeded by John Harvey, who in 1894 surrendered the horn to John Comins, the present holder.

But to return to the Masters of the Buckhounds. Among the notable ones of the last hundred years, were Lord Sandwich, who used to take a dice-box out hunting with him, and gamble with the Duke of Cumberland (not him of Culloden fame, but the brother of George III.) in the intervals of the chase; the Earl of Jersey, father of the famous Turfite, and husband of the wanton beauty who wrought such havoc with the domestic peace of the fourth George; the Earl of Chesterfield, who for three seasons dazzled the followers of the Buckhounds with the magnificence of his establishment; Earl Granville, courteous, affable, the 'Soapy Sam' of politics and diplomacy; Lord Hardwicke, the popular and jovial, whose magnificence rivalled that of Lord Chesterfield; the Earl of Cork, the mildest-mannered man that ever carried the gold couples; and Lord Suffield, of whom Lord Ribblesdale says: 'Lord Suffield has the art of galloping like steam between his fences, and yet jumping the place almost from a stand. He thus negotiates the trappiest obstacles with safety and despatch, without upsetting high-couraged and even fractious animals, and—for this is the real point—without giving spectators the faintest impression of sticky 'come-up' sort of riding. This means fine hands. The first time Lord Suffield went out with the Duhallow, a country which in the opinion of the natives is only practicable to those brought up within a few miles of Cork, they could never catch him for twenty minutes, a surprised top-sawyer of the hunt being overheard thus to exhort his friend: 'For God's sake, Mike, ride at the man in the beard!' Lastly, Lord Ribblesdale himself and the present Master, whom his predecessor thus eulogizes: 'Unsurpassed as a judge of a horse or a hound, and one of the most undeniable cross-country riders of his day, Lord Coventry brings knowledge and experience to bear upon every practical detail of his office. The ancient honour and everyday welfare of the Royal Hunt are in safe keeping.'

Of these Masters, Lord Granville is, of course, by far the most distinguished figure. If not, either as orator or statesman, of the higher class, he was an accomplished man of the world, a consummate parliamentarian, a clever debater, and a man of such sweet and even temper, that before his lubricating influence all friction vanished. Moreover, he was an Englishman to the backbone, and was always in touch with the feelings of his countrymen. What he was as a sportsman, and particularly in his capacity of Master of the Buckhounds, may be gathered from the following pleasant picture of him given by Lord Ribblesdale :—

'The first time I ever saw Lord Granville out hunting was with the Pytchley. I remember the incident most distinctly, and it fully bears out the reputation he left behind him in the Queen's country for resolute riding. It was a starving cold day. Lord Granville was looking ill, and suffering from gout, and he told me he had come out against his doctor's orders. He had on thick white duffell breeches, and boots known, I think, as Napoleons, like those in which Mr Herring's first-flight gentry lead the way. He and I had managed, with several others, to get thrown out, and we found ourselves with no visible means of getting to hounds, which were dragging along on a cold line two or three fields away. There was neither gate nor gap to help us, and a really high stake-and-bound fence, of the type John Leech drew so well, between us. A March day was just treating us to an interval of hail. I was riding a most ungenerous horse, who made no allowance for one's mistakes, and took a serious view of jumping without hounds. "I am afraid," said Lord Granville, with a pale smile, "we shall have to go; will you try, or shall I?" I felt that for once I should not be justified in following my leader. So I crammed Marsala at it, with a show of decision which did not take him in for a moment. Round he came, and our small party exchanged glances of discouragement. Lord Granville was riding an uncoupled rather Cleveland-bay-looking horse. He turned him suavely round at it, and over he went, and piloted his convoy to the haven where we would be; Marsala, who luckily did not like being left alone, at last climbing over somehow.'

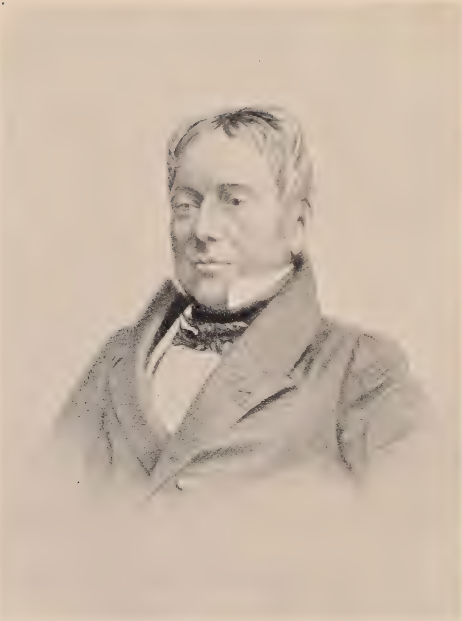
An admirable *raconteur*, too, was Lord Granville, and could tell a story, even against himself, with a dry humour that his hearers relished exceedingly. There was an indescribable unction in his way of recounting such an incident as the following. His lordship had bought a very expensive horse from Anderson, the dealer, and, meeting the latter some time afterwards, he said, 'Well, Anderson, you know the price was quite extravagant, but I am bound to say the horse is worth it.' To which Anderson, with a stiff bow and a grave face, replied, 'I can assure you, my lord, your approval is our only profit in the transaction.'

George William, ninth Earl of Coventry, who now for the second time holds the office of Master of the Buckhounds, comes of a family whose history is more remarkable for romantic domestic incidents than for great public services. The earldom was created in 1697, and the first earl distinguished himself by a marriage which had some elements of romance. He fell in love with one of his housemaids, Elizabeth Grimes by name, and made her his Countess. She appears to have been a young woman of exemplary character, as virtuous as she was beautiful, and, after the earl's death, she became the wife of a country gentleman of good family and estate, Thomas Savage of Elmley Castle, Worcestershire. The second earl had a remarkable spouse in Anne, daughter of Henry Somerset, first Duke of Beaufort, a lady of very strong religious views, the authoress of *Meditations and Reflexions, Moral and Divine*, who survived her husband for fifty-three years, and died a nonagenarian. The sixth earl excited the envy of his contemporaries by carrying off from a host of rivals, Maria, the eldest and loveliest of the three beautiful Gunnings, daughters of a penniless Irish Squire, who owed their successful marriages to the generosity of kind-hearted George Ann Bellamy, who lent the poor girls clothes in which to appear at a levee of the Lord-Lieutenant in Dublin Castle, where their dazzling beauty set all the men raving about them. Elizabeth, the second sister, was married under romantic circumstances to the Duke of Hamilton, at midnight, in Mayfair Chapel, with a ring of the bed curtains as the wedding circlet.

Three months later Maria became Countess of Coventry. Lord Coventry, whom Horace Walpole describes as 'a grave young lord of the remains of the patriot breed,' had long dangled after the eldest Miss Gunning, and the impetuosity of the Duke of Hamilton spurred him into emulation. When Lady Coventry was presented at Court she created a *furore*. The King, good old George III, openly expressed his admiration of her extraordinary beauty. She was mobbed wherever she went, by people eager to look upon the loveliest woman of the day, and, on one occasion, when she was taking her Sunday walk in Hyde Park, she was so seriously crushed by a reckless throng of admirers that His Majesty ordered a guard to attend her in future. Consequently, on the following Sunday, she paraded in the park with two sergeants of the Footguards in front of her, and twelve privates, with fixed bayonets, behind her. She died early, a victim to her own vanity in the use of poisonous cosmetics — a frivolous, empty-headed creature, with nothing but her good looks to recommend her. The earl was not inconsolable for his loss. Four years later he married again, much more satisfactorily, and lived to the good old age of eighty-seven.

The Coventrys have ever been a race who have done their duty as English nobles with quiet, unostentatious dignity. They have been keen sportsmen and good landlords. The present earl has well sustained the honourable traditions of his house. As a sportsman he has gained a high position both on the Turf and in the hunting-field. His knowledge of horses is admitted to be great, and he has the credit of having revived steeplechasing, and helped largely to settle that attractive sport on a sound basis. As a steward of the Jockey Club he has obtained the reputation of being something of the type of 'Rhadamanthus and stern Minos,' who, in Lord Brooke's opinion, were 'True types of justice while they lived here.' There is hardly another sport that can be named in which Lord Coventry has not been able in his day to hold his own with distinction. Both as Master of the Worcestershire Hounds and as Master of the Buckhounds, he has shown himself not only a bold rider, but an expert in the 'noble science.' Lady Coventry, too, shares her husband's delight in field sports, and, in her younger days, was admitted to be one of the finest horsewomen in the kingdom. How popular both the Earl and Countess are, was proved by the universal expressions of sympathy which poured in upon them when the terrible news came that their gallant soldier son, Major the Honourable Charles Coventry, had been killed at Krugersdorp in the mad raid of Dr Jameson. Happily that news proved to be false, and, when the sorrowing parents' mourning was suddenly turned into joy, the congratulations were as hearty as the condolences had been sincere.

Whether, when a Liberal administration again comes into power, as in the natural course of events must some day happen, the Royal Buckhounds will be abolished is a question which it would be unprofitable to discuss. There are those, of course, who maintain that the hunting of carted stags is cruel and unsportsmanlike, and, on that ground alone, call for the abolition of the Buckhounds. I have usually found that those who hold this view have little, if any, personal knowledge of what a run with the Queen's hounds is like. Lord Ribblesdale and Lord Coventry, who are both true sportsmen, and therefore averse from inflicting needless pain upon any living creature, do not see anything cruel about the sport, and I take it that their opinion is of far more value than that of humanitarian faddists, who are utterly ignorant of the details of the sport which, purely on hearsay evidence, they condemn. 'If,' says Lord Ribblesdale, 'the Queen's pleasure and the vicissitudes of politics gave me the chance of doing so—say to-morrow—I would gladly hunt the Queen's hounds for another three years. I should not say this if I thought it cruel.' There is more force in the arguments of those who object to the Buckhounds as entailing a useless expenditure of public money, for which there is no adequate return in the way of real sport. Lord Ribblesdale admits that 'wire in Middlesex, the villa in Berks, the pheasant in Bucks, all the apparatus of population and residential amenity, have changed the face and the habits of the Queen's country,' and that consequently the hunting of the carted deer is beset by ever-increasing difficulties. But is it necessary to keep to the old country? Are there any insuperable objections to carrying out Grantley Berkeley's suggestion, that the kennels of the Queen's hounds should be removed to the New Forest, where they could show the far more exhilarating sport of hunting the wild deer? The class of sportsmen who now hunt with the Queen's would not find the expense of a journey to the New Forest, with the railway facilities which would, no doubt, be placed at their disposal by the South-Western Company, beyond their means, the sport would be infinitely better, the country far more delightful. One thing is certain, hunting in the present Queen's country will soon be impossible, and if the venerable institution of the Royal Buckhounds, with the traditions of seven centuries behind it, is to add another century to its record, it will have to 'twitch its mantle' and hie quickly 'to fresh woods and pastures new.'



George Osbaldeston

GEORGE OSBALDESTON.

'THE OLD SQUIRE.'

I SHALL not easily forget my first sight of 'The Squire.' I never was so painfully disillusioned and disappointed in my life. It was on Newmarket Heath, eight and thirty years ago, that there was pointed out to me a figure which, I was told with bated breath, was that of 'the greatest all-round sportsman of his own or any other age.' And what I saw was *this*—a short, square, dumpy little old man, with shrivelled, shrunken frame, round shoulders, and limping gait, with a hard, disagreeable face, the features of which were almost as battered as those of an old-time prize-fighter, and dressed in loose, ill-fitting, shabby garments which looked as if they had been picked up at an old clothes shop! I was asked to believe that this ludicrously unheroic figure was the hero of my boyhood, with whose feats of daring and endurance the whole world had rung! the mighty horseman, athlete, cricketer, game-shot! the Admirable Crichton of Sport! It is true that Osbaldeston was then seventy-two, yet, even at that age, one usually expects to find *something* left to suggest what the man must have been in his prime; but there was absolutely *nothing* about 'the Squire's' appearance, as I first saw him, to indicate that he had ever possessed the marvellous physical powers which enabled him to excel in every manly sport, and surpass every rival among his contemporaries.

Perhaps, had I seen 'the Squire' in the flower of his manhood, when his well-knit muscular figure was in its perfection, before a hundred accidents by flood and field had crippled and deformed his frame, I might have found more correspondence between the real man and my ideal. But I should think that, even in his prime, George Osbaldeston's personal appearance must have disappointed those who, having heard of his matchless prowess as an all-round sportsman, saw him for the first time. For there was nothing big or imposing about him. But, if there was not much of him, what there was was all 'wire and whipcord.' As I heard an old Manx fisherman once quaintly put it, 'God packs His best stuff in small parcels.' And better 'stuff' than George Osbaldeston was made of it would be hard to find.

The subject of my sketch was born in Wimpole Street on the 26th of December 1787, and was the son of Mr Osbaldeston, of Hutton Bushell, near Scarborough. Though born in London, George Osbaldeston always considered himself a thoroughbred Yorkshireman, and used to lament that his mother had, in accordance with a fashion among ladies of that day, come up to the metropolis for her accouchement, and thus robbed him of a portion of his birthright. And yet I cannot help thinking that Southerners can claim almost as great a share in 'the Squire' as Northerners. For, not only was he born in the south, but he learned all his sportsmanship there. Mrs Osbaldeston became a widow when George was but six years old, and took up her abode at Bath. It was at Dash's 'Riding Academy' in that fashionable city that he received his first lessons in horsemanship. He soon showed himself an apt pupil, and, so proud was his master of the young Squire's riding, that whenever parents came to arrange about sending their sons to the 'Academy,' young Osbaldeston was invariably put on something smart, in order to display the efficiency of Mr Dash's system of teaching.

When Mrs Osbaldeston left Bath, her son was sent to Eton, where he soon became the fastest runner and the best oarsman and bowler in the school. His skill as a boxer also developed itself early, and whenever there was a Windsor boy with a fighting reputation, George was at once selected as the Eton representative to thrash him. The feat of running from Eton to Ascot Races and back after school hours, a distance of some twenty miles, was often accomplished by young Osbaldeston, and more than once he was caught *in flagrante delicto*, and had to suffer the penalty. There are probably still preserved among the traditions of Eton some of George Osbaldeston's many daring 'larks.'

On leaving school, George was placed under the charge of Dr Carr, vicar of Brighton, to be prepared for Oxford, and in May 1805, at the age of nineteen, he matriculated as a gentleman-commoner of Brasenose, where, as might have been expected, he was distinguished more for his sporting than his scholastic attainments.

From his earliest days 'the Squire' was passionately fond of hunting, and he made his *début* as a master when he was twenty-one, having purchased from Lord Jersey a fine pack of harriers, with which he hunted the country round his family estate of Hutton Bushell. His enthusiasm for sport, and his daring horsemanship, made him an immense favourite among his own tenantry and the sporting farmers all round that countryside. And it was with sincere regret that they received the announcement that 'the Squire' and his mother proposed to leave Hutton Bushell and reside at the Palace in Lincoln.

Soon after his arrival in the 'Shire of Fens,' Osbaldeston purchased Lord Monson's foxhounds and hunted the far-famed Burton country for five years. He always swore by the Monson blood, and it was from this stock that he bred and reared the finest pack of working hounds in the three kingdoms. When he left the Burton to hunt Jack Musters' country in Northamptonshire, the green-coated sportsmen of Lincolnshire presented him with a large silver salver, the handles of which represented two foxes' heads, bearing an inscription expressive of their admiration of the sport he had given them.

'The Squire's' stay in Jack Musters' country was short—it didn't suit him at all—and he next became Master of the Atherstone, to which he united Lord Vernon's Derbyshire country, purchasing the best portion of his lordship's hounds to strengthen his own kennels.

In the early part of the season of 1815, Osbaldeston hunted with great success in Derbyshire and Staffordshire, but, owing to an unpleasantness with Sir Henry Every, he removed his establishment, consisting of ninety couples of hounds and thirty hunters, into Derbyshire in January 1816. 'The Squire' felt aggrieved at something Sir Henry had said or done, and wrote for an explanation, but, receiving no reply, took the silence as an insult and challenged Sir Henry to a duel. As Osbaldeston was already, though under thirty, renowned as the best shot in England, Sir Henry thought it prudent to apologise. 'The Squire' accepted the apology, but abruptly took his hounds away.

When the great Assheton Smith resigned the Quorn to take the Burton country, Osbaldeston succeeded him and continued to show wonderful sport up to 1826, when he broke his leg whilst out one day with Lord Anson's hounds, and this accident prevented him from riding for more than a year. Touching this mishap, the late Captain Horatio Ross, of rifle-shooting renown, who was a contemporary, and to a certain extent a rival, of Osbaldeston, says:—'I never saw "the Squire" ride to hounds in his best day; before I made his acquaintance he had met with a terrible accident. During a very quick "thing" he had a fall. Sir James Musgrave, following far too closely on his heels, could not stop or turn his horse—he jumped right on "the Squire" and smashed one of his legs frightfully. I believe the bone protruded through his boot. After that fearful smash he was never the same man he had been previously—he was nervous in riding at "blind" unknown places, and he was painfully nervous if any one, during a run, was following rather close behind him—and no wonder.

'I have always heard those who knew his riding before his leg was broken, say that he was one of the hardest and straightest men across country they had ever seen. Notwithstanding this drawback, "the Squire" hunted his hounds to the last, and was always near enough to help them when at fault.'

In 1827, George Osbaldeston became Master of the Pytchley, and to show the excellence alike of the hounds and their master, it is enough to say that he had forty good days' sport out of fifty, and no less that twenty-three capital runs in succession. 'In fact,' says one who had many a fine day's sport with 'the Squire' at that time, 'his hounds were really wonderful; in proof of which it may be mentioned that, although only then numbering about fifty couple, he killed over sixty brace of foxes in one season. Dick Burton, who acted as whipper-in—for Mr Osbaldeston was always his own huntsman—said: "The pack was the best I ever saw or followed over any country; they were as stout as the day was long—there was no tiring them."'

The same remark as to endurance might with equal truth have been applied to their master. For, during the time of his Pytchley reign, he hunted the Thurlow country in Suffolk for two seasons, when it was his custom to meet the hounds on alternate mornings, after travelling all night, and travelling a distance in those days was no joke. Here is an instance of the toughness and hardihood of 'the Squire's' small but muscular frame. One day, during his Mastership of the Pytchley, he had had three good runs, and wishing to go to a ball at Cambridge, he first rode to Northampton, then hacked it to Cambridge, danced all night, rode back to Sulby Hall, a distance of sixty miles, hunted the same day, killing a brace of foxes, and rode fourteen miles home to dinner—never having even closed his eyes for two days and one night!

But the climax of all his feats of endurance and skill in the saddle was his memorable match to ride two hundred miles in ten hours. General Charritié made the match, the stakes being £1000, and Osbaldeston was to have as many horses as he liked. This was in 1831, when 'the Squire' was in his forty-seventh year. But, though he was no chicken, he went vigorously into training, galloping sixty miles every morning, and spending the rest of the day in partridge shooting, to relax the muscles. The event came off at the Newmarket Houghton meeting, over four miles, commencing and finishing at the Duke's stand. As he leaped into the saddle, 5 to 3 were freely offered on the rider against time. Mr Gully took 1000 to 100 that the feat would be accomplished in nine hours, and the distance was performed in eight hours forty-eight minutes, twenty-eight horses being used. The Squire realised £1800 in bets, besides the stakes, a sum which I imagine he might have quadrupled had he pleased. Of course, as soon as the thing was done, there were lots of critics who said it was not such a very great exploit after all. The Squire silenced these gentlemen by the following challenge. 'I challenge any man in the world, of any age or weight, to ride any distance he prefers, from 200 to 500 miles, for £20,000; but if he will only ride 200 or 250 miles, I will ride him for £10,000; or I will ride against the jockey of 7 st. whom they talk of backing, to ride 200 miles in 8 hours, receiving 30 min. difference between 7 st. and 11 st.; or I'll take £10,000 to £3000, or £20,000 to £6000, that I ride 200 miles in 8 hours, which, it must be allowed, would be a wonderful performance for 11 st. odd, and, I think, almost impossible—at least, a single accident would lose me the match, and I should have scarcely time to mount and dismount. I am always to be heard of at Pitsford, near Northampton.' The challenge was never taken up.

Here is a more romantic instance of the Squire's powers of endurance. When he was on a visit to Lincoln, he met at a dinner-party, previous to a county ball, the beautiful Miss Barton, afterwards Lady Sutton.

It happened that Miss Cracroft, a rival beauty, had a bouquet in which was a hothouse flower of exceeding rarity. It attracted general admiration, and Miss Barton especially admired it, whereupon her rival twitted her after the manner of dear friends. This was not lost upon Osbaldeston. Pleading an excuse after dinner for leaving the wine party, he got upon one of his horses and rode to the house of the person from whom the flower had been obtained, twenty-five miles distant, and brought back another and more brilliant specimen, which Miss Barton displayed in triumph at the supper table. The distance, fifty miles, was accomplished at night in less than four hours!

But, to my thinking, one of the manliest deeds ever done by 'the Squire' was his rescue of a drowning boy in the middle of a fast run. It was whilst he was hunting the Burton country. The hounds were running their fox at a tremendous pace, and had crossed the river Witham above Brace Bridge. A boy in one of the barges, in his excitement over watching the chase, lost his footing and fell into the river. It was deep and sluggish. The boy rose to the surface, sank again, and would undoubtedly have been drowned, for there was no assistance near enough to save him, when fortunately Osbaldeston galloped up, saw the drowning boy, turned from the bridge, rode over the fence into the marshy field, through which the Witham flowed, jumped off his horse, plunged into the water, dived after the boy and brought him safely to land.

What sort of cattle 'the Squire' rode may be gathered from the following anecdote, told by his old friend Edward Hayward Budd, the famous cricketer and athlete. 'I was,' says Mr Budd, 'hunting with "the Squire" at

Stilton (celebrated for cheese, which, be it known, is made two miles off), Earl Fitzwilliam having given permission to hunt his property there. Mason, the horse-dealer (father of the celebrated steeplechase rider Jem Mason), living at Stilton, had at the time an Irish horse called Shamrock, a splendid animal, of a beautiful bright chestnut. "The Squire" had told me his fancy for him, but did not like to give the two hundred guineas asked. I offered to go and buy him, and Osbaldeston accepted the proposal. "If he can, as I have heard, jump two hurdles placed the one over the other, buy him," said "the Squire." On my reaching Mason's place, Shamrock was, at my request, brought into the spacious yard, and I must say that his appearance had not been over-rated. On my asking if he could jump the hurdles as represented, two of the ordinary kind were placed one on the other, and the noble creature was ridden up, and, to my surprise, cleared them perfectly. To me it was a wonderful feat, displaying as it did not only the horse's jumping capability, but its docility. The height was upwards of six feet, and the width being but six feet, it astonished me he did not swerve, there being nothing on either side to prevent him. I bought him at a saving of some twenty pounds to "the Squire's" pocket, and I have often heard Osbaldeston say, that, though he hunted him many years, he never had a fall with him.'

It may shock some sticklers for 'the rigour of the game,' to learn that 'the Squire' was in the habit of buying foxes and turning them down to fill his sparsely populated coverts. He used to commission Mr Budd to buy them for him from a dealer named Hopkins in Tottenham Court Road, and they averaged about thirty shillings a brace. 'I have sent "the Squire,"' says Mr Budd, 'ten or twelve brace at a time, and it really was a pretty sight when the little creatures, about half-grown, were secured in the bed of a tilted cart, which, to ensure safety, was the means of transit.'

But 'the Squire' was very particular about the breed and quality of his purchased foxes, for I find him writing thus to his friend Budd: 'Let me know directly what Hopkins says about foxes. Recollect they must be *old English foxes*, no damned French dunghills. About three brace per month will do.' The letter is dated November 10th, 1822, and the foxes were evidently wanted for immediate sport—hence the necessity for their being 'old,' but as a rule 'the Squire' preferred the half-grown ones, described by Mr Budd, which were sent down to him a couple of months or more before the season began. In Sussex, I believe, they are not so particular, but have their foxes imported from France, and poor rogues they are.

I have already alluded to the excellence of 'the Squire's' hounds, descended from the Monson and Yarborough blood, and bred, reared and hunted by himself, and in proof of the estimation in which they were held, I may mention that when Mr Harvey Combe, who purchased them of Mr Osbaldeston, sent them to Tattersall's, *five couples* fetched *thirteen hundred and sixty guineas!*

In 1840, after thirty-five years' hard hunting, George Osbaldeston laid down the horn and retired from the duties of a M.F.H. The followers of the Pytchley, to show their appreciation of the splendid sport which he had given them for thirteen seasons, presented him with a magnificent snuff-box bearing this inscription, 'To the best sportsman of any age or country.'

It is, of course, mainly as a hunting man that I am concerned with George Osbaldeston in these pages, but any sketch of his career which did not give some idea of the versatility of his sportmanship would be an injustice to the memory of a man, whose claim to fame is not so much that he excelled in one sport, as that he excelled in many.

As a steeplechase rider, for example, 'the Squire' had no superior and was never beaten. Among the most celebrated of the matches which he rode was the one between Clinker and Clasher for 1000 guineas, made while he and Captain Horatio Ross (the owner of Clinker) were shooting a match at pigeons at the Red House, Battersea. Clinker had always a first-rate reputation as a fencer, and 'the Squire' was to have ridden Clasher against him the previous year, if he had kept sound, but, as the horse fell lame, the match was off, according to the articles. The Captain happened to mention that Clinker was going up to Tattersall's that afternoon, and this brought up the subject of the match which had fallen through, with the result that, after a good deal of chaffing, the match was remade, one of the conditions being that 'the Squire' was to ride Clasher; to this Osbaldeston at first demurred, on the ground that it did not seem consistent with his dignity as High Sheriff of Yorkshire, but as the stipulation was a *sine quâ non*, he consented. The line chosen was from Dalby Windmill to Lipton, in Leicestershire, and Dick Christian, then in his zenith, was put up on Clinker. The attendance was commensurate with the interest the event created, and thousands of pounds depended on the result. With a view of frightening 'the Squire,' the owner of Clinker told Dick to follow in his track, and to ford the brook for the purpose of saving his horse. These tactics, however, had quite the contrary effect to what was anticipated, as the 'following' only made 'the Squire' more determined, and the wading gave him a good lead, which he got by jumping over; and, discovering a gap in an awkward corner of a field, he won, but it was a close shave, for the two horses took the last fence together, and had not Clinker fallen the result might have been different.

But 'the Squire's' connection with horses was not confined to steeplechasing and hunting; he also dabbled with the Turf; and I am bound to say that his career as a Turfite was not altogether creditable to him. He was mixed up with the notorious Ludlow scandal, in which Beardsworth and a whole gang of scoundrels were concerned. Honest John Gully walked up to Osbaldeston in the 'Salutation' at Doncaster, and bluntly accused him of 'buying horses to sell the public,' then roundly charged him with having bought Ludlow to make things safe for Fang. Of course there was a fearful row. The hot-tempered Squire sent a challenge to Gully, and there was a report that they met next day, pistol in hand, at twelve paces, when Gully received a bullet which pierced his hat, and actually cut a lane through his thick hair. But, circumstantial as the report was, it had no foundation in fact. That a challenge was sent is true enough, but the difference was amicably settled without a shot being fired. Not so, however, in the case of Lord George Bentinck; then powder really was burned. The Squire had purchased a horse named Rush, which, owing to a fictitious trial, was very favourably handicapped at Heaton Park races. The horse ran in the Trial Stakes at that meeting, and was nowhere. The next day he was started for the Cup, and a gentleman was put on to get all the House money, whilst another commissioner was equally busy at Manchester. From ten to one, Rush came down in the betting to two to one, the starting price. As the Squire was walking the horse down to the post, Lord George Bentinck cried, 'two hundred to one hundred against Rush.' Osbaldeston took the bet, and Rush won in a canter. This was a very suspicious improvement upon the previous day's form, and provoked a good deal of unparliamentary language. The Squire left immediately after the race was over, for cub-hunting, and did not meet Lord George again till the Craven meeting at Newmarket.

On asking his lordship for the money, Osbaldeston was surprised to see Lord George draw himself up very stiffly, and still more surprised to hear him say, 'I am amazed that I should be asked for it; the affair was a robbery, and the Jockey Club considered it so.' The Squire kept his temper, but firmly insisted on being paid. 'Can you count?' asked Lord George in his most insolent tones. 'I could at Eton,' retorted the Squire; whereupon Lord George flung him a bundle of notes, which the Squire very carefully and slowly counted; then, looking his lordship full in the face, said, 'You shall hear from me again.' A challenge of course followed, but Lord George said, 'I will not go out with the fellow!' and would send no other answer. Whereupon the Squire sent back the fierce reply: 'Tell him that I will pull his nose at Tattersall's, and those who know me are aware that I always keep my word.' Lord George could not stand *that*, so they met one morning at Wormwood Scrubs. Osbaldeston was told that he must not fire at Lord George, as his lordship had said that he could not possibly fire at the Squire after insulting him. But the Squire was not inclined to trust his lordship. Screwing himself up, so as not to give a chance away, with pistol close to his side, he awaited the signal. But the Honourable Colonel Anson, Lord George's second, with the laudable desire of preserving his principal's life, if possible, from so dead a shot, requested the Squire to keep his eyes fixed on him (Colonel Anson) till he gave the signal. Lord George's bullet whistled harmlessly in the air, whilst the Squire's went through Lord George's hat. 'I didn't think you were so bad a shot!' exclaimed Colonel Anson. 'It might happen differently next time,' replied the Squire, sullenly. Honour was satisfied; but Lord George quitted the field without the customary salute to his antagonist, and for years they were strangers, till old John Day brought them together again.

As a cricketer, George Osbaldeston was very great. He was a hard, slashing hitter—witness his two grand scores of one hundred and twelve and sixty-eight for M.C.C. against Middlesex, and made his runs in good style, but was chiefly noted for the tremendous pace of his underhand bowling. It was almost as fast as that of Big Brown of Brighton, who always required two long stops. It was at single-wicket matches that 'the Squire' was greatest; and probably every cricketer has heard of his match with the two cracks of Nottingham, when Osbaldeston scored eighty-four in his first innings, and then gave up his bat, whilst the others only scored seventeen in their two innings. Equally well known is that match in which the Squire, with Lambert, played four of England. The four included E. H. Budd, who made more off his own bat in the first and only innings of the four, than the Squire and Lambert did in their two innings. The result so provoked Osbaldeston that he immediately took up a pen and erased his name from the list of M.C.C. members in Lord's Pavilion. It was a silly and childish piece of petulance, unworthy of a sportsman, and the M.C.C. never forgot or forgave the insult.

As a shot, both at game and pigeons, 'the Squire's' skill was phenomenal. On one occasion he killed ninety-eight pheasants out of a hundred shots, and it is on record that he bagged in one day at Ebberston, his own place, no less than ninety-five brace of partridges, nine brace of hares and five couple of rabbits. This feat was accomplished, it must be remembered, *over dogs* and in the old muzzle-loading days. But even this was eclipsed by an exploit which Mr E. H. Budd thus describes. 'I had backed him with Thellusson to kill eighty brace of partridges in one day. I handed him the gun for every shot. He killed *ninety-seven* brace and a half, and there were five brace and a half of partridges picked up next day, so that he in reality killed one hundred and three brace and a half of partridges, nine hares and a rabbit in the one day, a feat never equalled in the annals of sporting.'

Snipe-shooting, however, was the sport of which he was fondest, and he has been many times known to have brought down twenty or thirty couple of a morning. But, even Homer sometimes nods, and Captain Ross tells the following amusing story of 'rascally bad shooting' on the part of 'the Squire' and himself. 'During one of my visits to Ebberston (Osbaldeston's Yorkshire seat), we were shooting the covert of Hutton Bushell, "the Squire's" best beat for pheasants. A particularly gentleman-like man (a stranger to every one out), joined us, and, addressing "the Squire," said that he had heard that the two greatest shots in England were present, and that he had come some distance in the hope of being allowed to walk a short time with us and see the "cracks shoot." "The Squire" was most civil, and begged he would take a spare gun he had out, and shoot along with us. This the gentleman declined. Well, a minute or two afterwards a cock pheasant rose between "the Squire" and myself, not five yards from either of us. Quick as lightning, bang went "the Squire"—missed! and bang went Captain Ross—missed! Bang again "the Squire"—missed! bang again Captain Ross—missed! and away went the pheasant, chuck, chuck, chuck! The gentleman took off his hat, made us a bow, and said, "Thank you; I am much obliged, and quite satisfied," and away he went. I burst out laughing, but "the Squire" was not quite orthodox on that occasion.'

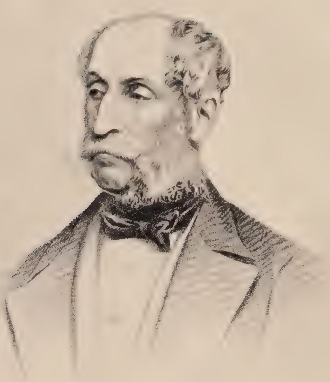
As a billiard player 'the Squire' was one of the best amateurs of his day, and indeed with the exception of coursing and fishing, for which he never cared, there was no branch of sport in which he did not excel. Of his skill as a whip I may give the following instance. 'The Squire' laid a wager of 100 guineas with Mr Paul Methuen that he (Osbaldeston) would drive an ordinary Greenwich four-in-hand stage, with full complement of passengers, from a given point in St Paul's Churchyard to Greenwich in an hour. When 'the Squire' came to the post he found that Mr Methuen had filled the coach with the biggest Life Guardsmen he could get. On arriving at the bottom of Ludgate Hill, Osbaldeston was told that he had started a yard or two short of the correct spot. 'The Squire' was never the man to hesitate about anything; he quickly turned the horses' heads, and, having reached the proper starting-place, commenced *de novo*, and accomplished the distance within the hour from his first starting. When one takes into consideration the road as it then was, and the kind of horses attached in those days to such vehicles, it must be admitted that this was a great feat of driving.

But, amid all his multifarious sports, 'the Squire' found time to fulfil the social and political duties of his position. It was his mother's ambition to see him in Parliament, and, to please her, he contested the election for East Retford, and was triumphantly returned at the head of the poll. He was not much pleased, however, with the task of canvassing for votes. One dirty fellow, he told Mr Budd, approached him in a most patronising manner. Holding out his filthy paw, he said, 'Tip us your *manus*, brother sportsman! We both hunts varmint; you kills foxes and I kills rats.'

In his later life 'the Squire' fell on evil days. The splendid estate which he inherited slipped somehow through his hands, and he was left straitened and impoverished in his old age. It can hardly be said of him that he was a spendthrift, but he was open-hearted and trusted others. He was constantly deceived and robbed, and when his affairs were getting into confusion, he had not the moral nerve to pull up in time; nor had he a sufficiently 'business' head on his shoulders to guide him safely out of his troubles.

Apart from his connection with the Turf, which was undoubtedly stained by some shady transactions, 'the Squire's' career as a sportsman was a straight and honourable one. Those who knew him best have borne enthusiastic testimony to his high character. 'A noble fellow; always straight,' was the verdict of his old friend Budd; whilst his great rival and only equal as a shot, Captain Horatio Ross, writes thus of him in 1867: 'As a general sportsman, as one who went in at everything in the 'ring,' he was the best man England has produced during the present century; and I could not say more in his praise. Besides, however, his high qualities of pluck, endurance, and skill in all manly sports, he was a generous, kind-hearted, hospitable man. I lived with him for a good many years, and I can say that during all that time I never heard him speak harshly or in any unkind way of any human being; on the contrary, he seemed always anxious to make excuse for those who were absent.'

It was on the 1st of August 1866 that George Osbaldeston passed over to the majority, in his seventy-ninth year, leaving behind him such a reputation as an all-round sportsman as no man has ever won before or is likely to win again.



Cardigan

THE EARL OF CARDIGAN.

THE storm of angry controversy which once raged round the name of Lord Cardigan, the leader of the immortal Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, has died away, and hardly even its faintest echoes have reached the ears of the present generation. It is possible, therefore, to review with something like judicial calmness a career which, forty years ago, one dared not have touched upon without rousing feelings of the fiercest and bitterest partisanship. It is, of course, mainly with Lord Cardigan as a sportsman that I am concerned here, and his conduct and character as a soldier may seem outside my *métier*. But at the same time I feel that any sketch of his life would be incomplete and unsatisfactory which avoided all reference to the incidents which have invested his name with a peculiar, if not always agreeable, interest.

James Thomas Brudenell, seventh Earl of Cardigan, was born on the 16th of October 1797 at Hambledon, in Hampshire, a place famous in the annals both of cricket and hunting. Harrow was his school, and Oxford his university. He took no degree, however, but, like the bulk of young artistocrats of his day, made the 'Grand Tour.' On his return, Lord Brudenell entered Parliament as member for Marlborough, and sat for that borough till 1829, when a difference with the patron of the borough, the Marquis of Ailesbury, to whom he owed his nomination, on the subject of Catholic Emancipation, led to his retirement. But this did not end Lord Brudenell's connexion with the House of Commons, for he, or his father for him, promptly purchased the Cornish pocket borough of Fowey, and thus again secured a seat in Parliament. In 1832, when the Reform Bill excitement was at full flood, he fought a fierce and costly battle as one of the candidates for Mid-Northamptonshire, and was returned with Lord Milton as his colleague.

But, previously to this, in the year 1824, Lord Brudenell had entered the army at the mature age of seven and twenty. If he had been tardy, however, in taking up the profession of arms, he speedily made up for lost time, by leaping from grade to grade with astonishing, and, indeed, scandalous rapidity, owing to his lavish expenditure in purchasing promotion. Within six years of his joining the 8th Hussars as a cornet, he was lieutenant-colonel! Such were the advantages which the good old system of promotion by purchase offered to a man of unlimited wealth.

His brother officers, some of them war-worn veterans of the Peninsula, all of them his seniors in the service by many years, naturally resented his walking over their heads in this unceremonious fashion. The feeling against him was bitter in the extreme, and his offensive manner towards his subalterns added to their hostility and discontent. As lieutenant-colonel of the 15th Hussars he instituted a system of espionage and petty tyranny which was simply insufferable, and at last matters were brought to a head by his gross breach of the rules of the service in putting one of his officers, Captain Wathen, under arrest at Cork, and, despite the Captain's appeal for a court-martial, keeping him for nine months in custody without taking any steps to bring him to trial. When at last the court-martial was held, Captain Wathen so completely justified his conduct, that he was honourably acquitted, whilst Brudenell was severely censured for subjecting his officers to a system of 'discipline revolting to every proper and honourable feeling of a gentleman.' The result was the following announcement in 'General Orders,'—'His Majesty has been pleased to order that Lieut.-Col. Lord Brudenell shall be removed from the command of the 15th Hussars.' His latest biographer euphemistically puts it, '*Brudenell had a hint to resign!*' An order of removal is, I think, a pretty *broad* hint!

The public considered this order equivalent to dismissal from the army. But his father was an intimate friend of the King (William IV.), and, through his interest in the highest quarter, procured for his son the command of the 11th Hussars, then stationed in India. Brudenell joined the regiment in 1836, and returned the following year to find that his father had just died, and that he had consequently succeeded to the title and a rent roll of £40,000 a year. But his succession to the earldom did not render him any the more popular with his brother officers, though he spent £10,000 a year in making the 11th the smartest cavalry regiment in the service, and gained for it the high distinction of calling itself, by Royal permission, 'Prince Albert's Own Hussars.'

The Earl had a most extraordinary knack of making himself disagreeable to his comrades-in-arms, though in ordinary society his courtesy and affability rendered him a general favourite. A wager arose, when the regiment was quartered at Canterbury, over the colour of a bottle, whether it were black or dark green, and Cardigan asserted and maintained his opinion so offensively, in face of overwhelming proof of his mistake, that there ensued what was commonly known as 'The Black Bottle Riot.' The upshot of this was a quarrel between Captain Richard Anthony Reynolds of the 11th and his colonel. Cardigan had, in a very marked way, abstained from inviting Captain Reynolds and his brother to a military ball given at his house, and when asked his reason, stated bluntly that the brothers Reynolds were not persons he cared to have under his roof.

Then Captain Reynolds wrote a most insolent letter to Lord Cardigan, his commanding officer, sneering at his lordship's reputation as a duellist, and suggesting that Lord Cardigan sheltered himself behind his position from giving the satisfaction due from one gentleman to another. Reynolds was court-martialled and cashiered, quite justly as it seems to me, for he had been guilty of a most gross and glaring act of insubordination. But this was not by any means the end of the matter. A letter, signed with the initials 'H. T.,' appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, giving a garbled account of the incidents which had led to the court-martial, and making most offensive charges against Lord Cardigan. The latter took steps to discover the author of the letter, and, finding that it was a certain Captain Harvey Tucker, promptly challenged his traducer. The duel took place near the old windmill on Wimbledon Common, familiar to riflemen in the pre-Bisley days. The first exchange of shots was harmless, but in the second Captain Tucker was severely wounded. The miller, who was a constable, arrested Lord Cardigan, and so strongly did public feeling run against the Earl, that there was a universal clamour for his trial. Cardigan exercised his right as a peer, and claimed to be tried by his peers. Sixty years had elapsed since such a trial had taken place, and the case created extraordinary interest and excitement.

On the 16th of February 1841, Lord Cardigan appeared at the Bar of the House of Lords to answer the charge against him. Lord Denman presided as Lord High Steward. Sir John Campbell, the Attorney-General (afterwards Lord Chancellor, and author of the *Lives of the Chancellors*), conducted the prosecution. Sir William Follett, one of the ablest and subtlest cross-examiners the Bar has ever produced, was counsel for the defence. When the case was concluded on each side, the Lord High Steward put the question to each of the peers in turn, beginning with the junior Baron present—'John, Lord Keame, how says your lordship—Is James Thomas, Earl of Cardigan, guilty of the felony whereof he stands indicted, or not guilty?' Then Lord Keame, amid deep silence, stood up uncovered, and laying his right hand on his heart, said, 'Not guilty, upon my honour.' One after another each peer returned the same verdict, until it came to the turn of William Harry, Duke of Cleveland, and he, after a moment's hesitation, said, 'Not guilty, *legally*, upon my honour,' with a marked stress upon the adverb. Lord Cardigan, whose handsome, aristocratic face had shown no sign of emotion of any kind from start to finish, then bowed with dignity to the Lord High Steward, walked erect and soldierlike from the

Bar, and the stately judicial ceremony was at an end.

It is only fair to Lord Cardigan to say that, bitter as the feeling of the officers of his regiment was against him, he was immensely popular among the privates. And even his deadliest enemy was compelled to acknowledge, that, though his ideas of duty and discipline might be harsh, mistaken and arbitrary, he was yet at heart a man of the kindliest and most generous disposition. There were, even among the officers who detested him, some who were indebted to him for gracious assistance and consideration in their private affairs, but, as all his acts of charity and kindness were done in secret, the public knew nothing of them. He was a man who hated ostentation. His anonymous gifts in public and private charity were munificent, but he resolutely refused to let his name be published in connection with any charitable donation.

It was not until he was fifty-seven years of age that Lord Cardigan had an opportunity of seeing active service. When war was declared against Russia in 1853, and the Allies decided upon the invasion of the Crimea, Lord Lucan was placed in command of the cavalry, with Lord Cardigan under him as commander of the Light Brigade. Neither of them had ever 'smelt powder,' and there was much savage grumbling in military circles at the appointment of two elderly men, with no experience of war, to such important commands, when there were plenty of dashing officers, who had distinguished themselves in a score of Asiatic campaigns, from whom far more competent leaders might have been chosen. But, of course, red tape and interest were predominant, and public spirit went to the wall.

From the very first there was friction between Lord Lucan and Lord Cardigan. Both were obstinate, masterful, self-willed, and diametrically opposed in opinion on every subject under the sun. To me, Cardigan's character, as displayed during his career in the Crimea, is an enigma. He was an enthusiastic soldier, and yet, so little sympathy had he with the rank and file of his command, that, whilst they were roughing it ashore, he every evening retired to his luxurious yacht in Balaclava Bay, where he dined sumptuously and slept comfortably. It is true that he had permission from Lord Raglan to do so. But one would have thought that even the most callous and selfish of men would at such a time have seen the expediency of sharing the privations of his comrades, were it only to avoid the drawing of invidious comparisons. Yet, while Lucan, with manly disdain for comfort, roughed it, like an old campaigner, Cardigan sought the solace of his beautifully-fitted yacht and his accomplished French *chef*.

And yet the Earl was no feather-bed soldier. Those who for years had admired his prowess in the hunting-field, knew that he was a bold and hardy sportsman who would never let his comfort interfere with his sport. Kinglake's opinion is that Cardigan was so peculiarly constituted that he felt for himself that intense solicitude, which most men feel only for a beloved wife or child or parent. He appeared to look at himself from an outside point of view, as a being specially entrusted to his care by Providence, a precious charge whose interests it was his stern duty to regard before those of everyone else in the world. Whether this view of his character be correct or not, I shall not stay to inquire. All I will say is that it does not satisfy me, nor render Lord Cardigan's conduct less incomprehensible.

At last his opportunity came, and he was given such a chance of showing what stuff he was made of as falls to the lot of few men. That he wholly and fatally misunderstood the order sent to him by Lord Lucan on that memorable 25th of October 1854 needs no demonstration. The fiery and impetuous Nolan at first confirmed Cardigan's mistaken view of the duty assigned him, and, unfortunately, that gallant officer was struck dead by a shell when in the very act of frantically pointing out to Cardigan his error. Faithfully and heroically the leader of the Light Brigade obeyed the order which he had so tragically misunderstood, and led his devoted band into the jaws of death. And Lord Lucan took no steps to stop him in his mad career, though it seems certain that he might have done so. Kinglake thus graphically describes the appearance of the leader of the Light Brigade, as he rode out on that glorious but insane charge.

'Lord Cardigan had so good a stature that, although somewhat long in the fork, he yet sat rather tall in the saddle, and notwithstanding his fifty-seven years, he had a figure which retained the slenderness of youth. His countenance, highly bred and of the aquiline cast, had not been without such humble share as a mere brother might be expected to have of that beauty which once made famous the ancient name of Brudenell. Far from disclosing the real faults of his character, the features of the man rather tended to confirm the first popular impression that was created by the tidings of the light cavalry charge, and to indicate a nature which might have in it something of chivalrous, nay, even

Quixotic exaltation. His blue, frank-looking genial eyes revealed none of the narrowness of disposition which I have thought myself obliged to ascribe to him. As might be supposed, he had an excellent cavalry seat, and was erect—but also stiff—in the saddle. He wore the uniform of his old regiment, the 11th Hussars; but, instead of dangling loose from the shoulders, his pelisse—richly burdened in front with gold lace—was worn closely put on, like a coat, and did not at all break or mitigate the rigid outline of his figure. The charger he rode was a thoroughbred chestnut, with marks of a kind visible from afar, which in controversy it may be well to remember. On the near side before, as well as on the near side behind, the horse had one white leg.'

Even Cardigan's detractors are compelled to admit that he led that charge in perfect style. He never for a moment lost his coolness and nerve. Once, he laid his sword across the breast of an excited officer, who wished to quicken the pace, and said, 'Stay, sir; how dare you attempt to ride before your commanding officer?' He regulated the pace of the charge as calmly and methodically as if he were on the review ground or in the hunting-field. 'Lord Cardigan's valour,' says Kinglake, 'was not at all of the wild, heedless kind, but the result of strong determination. Even from his way of riding to hounds, it was visible, they say, that the boldness he evinced was that of a resolute man with a set purpose.' As, ever in front, he led his men with unflinching firmness into the storm of shot and shell, he must have realised what a 'forlorn hope' he was engaged upon, and what small chance there was of any of those who rode down that valley of death ever returning alive. But his duty was to obey orders, and he obeyed them to the letter. He was the first to dash in at a gallop among the Russian guns, but, unfortunately for his reputation, he was not the last to come out. Beyond all question, he left the men, whom he had so gallantly led to their goal, to find their way out of the tangle in which they were involved, as best they could. From the moment he got among the Russian cavalry he effaced himself as a leader, and simply fought, like Hal-o'-the-Wynd, 'for his own hand.' Why he should so strangely have forgotten or ignored the duties of a leader is an enigma to which no one has offered a satisfactory solution. He was not the sort of man to lose his head in any crisis, yet unless he did so on that occasion, his conduct is inexplicable.

Two months later he returned to England, the alleged reason for his leaving the Crimea being ill health, yet his appearance at the various complimentary banquets given him hardly suggested incapacity for active service in the field. No doubt, the real reason was that the friction between himself and Lord Lucan had become so pronounced that his presence in the Crimea would only have led to further unpleasantness, and the Government were only too glad to find an excuse for getting him away, by appointing him Inspector-General of Cavalry at home. At this time he was the object of the people's idolatry. Everywhere he was welcomed as a hero; and in his speeches at the public banquets given in his honour by the Lord Mayor of London and various municipal bodies in the provinces, he, with that tranquil self-esteem characteristic of him, took the honours showered upon him as his due, and enlarged upon his own prowess with a *naïvété* which, in any other man, would have been stigmatised as braggadocia, but which, in Cardigan, was regarded as only the natural pride of a simple-hearted hero in his own exploits.

That he believed himself to be a hero, and that he also believed his conduct as leader of the famous charge to have been from first to last irreproachable, there can be no doubt whatever. It was a point on which he was extremely sensitive, and, as late as 1863, when Lieutenant-Colonel Somerset Calthorpe, Lord Raglan's nephew and aide-de-camp, published 'Letters from Headquarters,' and therein stated that '*after* the charge unfortunately Lord Cardigan was not present when most required,' Cardigan at once filed a criminal information for libel against the author. He was, however, non-suited, though the Lord Chief-Justice probably expressed the sentiments of the general public, when he said that 'any criticism of the man who led the Light Cavalry charge at Balaclava should be a generous and liberal criticism.'

Throughout all these stormy passages of his life Lord Cardigan had no more staunch partisans and no warmer admirers than the fellow-sportsmen who had hunted with him in the Shires. From his earliest days he had been devoted to the Chase. He figures among the hard riders and first-flight men, Lord Forester, Captain John White, Val Maher, Frank Holyoake, in 'Nimrod's' famous description of a great run with the Quorn under George Osbaldeston's Mastership. To this day the story is told of how he and his cousin, Wilbraham Tollemache, had a friendly wager as to which would be in first at the finish of a run, and how Cardigan rode his tired horse into the Welland to swim after the hounds and was within an ace of being drowned, for he was a poor swimmer, yet managed to gasp out, as Tollemache, who could swim like an otter, passed him in mid-stream, 'Mind, Wilbraham, I was in first.' But let his old friend Whyte Melville describe the chief incidents in Lord Cardigan's hunting career.

'When not engaged in military duty, living either at his own home or within easy reach of that grassy range of uplands known as High Leicestershire, probably no man has ever seen so many good runs in a lifetime as the late Lord Cardigan. He began hunting when a boy, he followed the chase unremittingly during manhood, and up to threescore years and ten could have sailed away on a good horse from nineteen out of every twenty men who got a start with him from a covert side. His style of riding was peculiarly easy and graceful, his spare well-shaped figure and length of limb giving him every advantage in the saddle; while in that essential quality for which we can find no better word than pluck, it is hardly necessary to say he was unrivalled. The manner in which he crossed a country—and High Leicestershire is a country that of all others demands great determination in man and horse—is best conveyed by the epithet "undeniable." He gave the animal credit for those qualities its rider possessed in so eminent a degree; and, to the honour of his horses be it said, they seldom failed him at his need, facing and getting over extraordinarily large fences with apparent ease and safety. He left them very much to their own sagacity, never pulling them about, and taking his falls, when he did "come to grief," with a perfect good humour and *sang froid*. Of these he could not but have sustained a considerable number, some of a truly serious nature. Amongst them perhaps the worst was one over a gate into the Uppingham Road at the end of a good run many years ago, which deprived him of sense and motion for nearly four-and-twenty hours. Unless very much hurt, however, he was sure to show to the front again, as soon as he regained the saddle. To be "soft," as he called it, was a weakness of which he would have been heartily ashamed in himself, and sufficiently intolerant in another.'

'It must not be supposed, however, that Lord Cardigan was a mere *riding* sportsman; on the contrary, no man could be fairer with hounds, or more disposed to give them every chance; and, although he dearly loved a fine run in which there were difficult fences to be crossed, and much relished the emulation of competing with those whom he used to class together on what he called "the short list," yet he was by no means insensible to the charms of a woodland run, and hunted very regularly with the Pytchley and Mr Fitzwilliam's hounds, when they came into his neighbourhood in the spring. It was a part of his character never to sacrifice a duty to a pleasure, but he found or made time to go out hunting whenever a pack of foxhounds met within his reach.'

From 1839 to 1842 Lord Cardigan kept a pack of staghounds in Leicestershire, and showed good sport. But he soon returned to his first love, and, for the rest of his life, fox-hunting held the premier place in his affections. For racing he cared but little; betting, or, indeed, gambling in every form, was distasteful to him. He was an excellent shot, and his shooting parties at Deene Park were looked forward to with keen delight by those who were fortunate enough to be invited. As a host he was perfect, never weary of devising means to add to the pleasure and comfort of his guests. In his hospitality, at any rate, there was no taint of that selfdevotion which so strangely distorted some phases of his life. He was essentially a simple-hearted man. There was no guile about him. He showed himself to the world exactly as he was, concealing nothing, extenuating nothing, leaving the world to like him or dislike him as it pleased. He was the most charitable and kindly of men. No one ever appealed to his generosity in vain. The last act of his life was one of kindness; on the 28th of March 1868 he set out on a visit of condolence to the bereaved family of one of his dependants. The horse he was riding was young and restive. It reared suddenly and fell, crushing Lord Cardigan beneath its weight. He was taken up unconscious, and never spoke again. So, the hero who had come unscathed out of the storm of Russian shot at Balaclava, who had survived a hundred perils in the hunting-field, one of the finest and boldest horsemen in Europe, met his death in a tussle with a restive colt in a quiet English country lane.

What manner of man he seemed to the world in general I have endeavoured to show. How he appeared to those who knew and loved him may be gathered from this eloquent panegyric of Whyte Melville's:—'Old war-worn veterans mourn for the stern commander who never shirked a duty, for the staunch comrade who never failed a friend. Young rising soldiers are sad to think that their ideal has been quenched, that their hero too has vanished like another. Magnates of the land, his peers and equals, find time to grieve for one who was an ornament to his rank, an honour to his order; but—sorrows far more precious than these—tears fall fast and thick from the widow and the fatherless, while they sob out a blessing on the memory of their best benefactor, on the kindly heart always ready to console, on the generous hand always open to relieve, on the gallant handsome face that never hardened towards a suppliant, as it never blanched before a foe.'

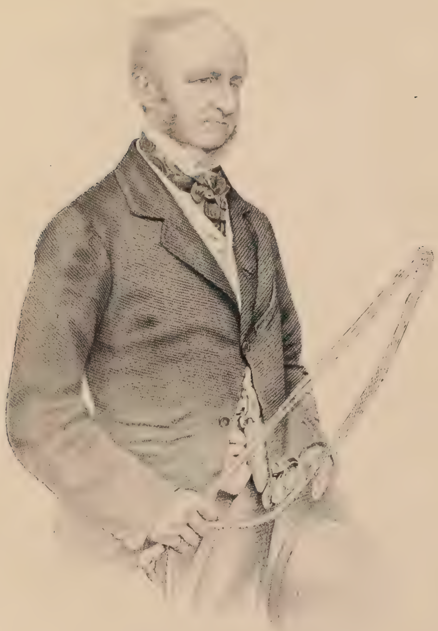
FREDERICK P. DELMÉ-RADCLIFFE

YOU can count almost on the fingers of one hand the Masters of Hounds who have ventured into the paths of authorship; and of these only three can be said to have established themselves as classics in the literature of sport: Peter Beckford, with whom I have already dealt, R. T. Vyner, author of 'Notitia Venatica,' and the subject of my present sketch, whose admirable treatise on 'The Noble Science' will always command readers, if only for its entertaining style. Indeed, Mr Delmé-Radcliffe might well stand for the representative type of 'The Sportsman as Man of Letters.'

Frederick Peter Delmé-Radcliffe, born in 1804, came of an ancient family claiming descent from Richard Radcliffe, of the Tower, near Bury, in Lancashire, who was a person of note in the time of Edward the First, and distinguished himself at the battle of Crecy. The present family seat, Hitchin Priory, was granted by Henry the Eighth to Sir Ralph Radcliffe, on the expulsion of the White Carmelites, what time

> Bluff Harry broke into the spence
> And turned the cowls adrift.

The Delmés became united with the Radcliffes, and the two names were conjoined, in the last century, when



F. P. Delmé Radcliffe

the father of Frederick Peter married the daughter of Peter Delmé, the dashing and eccentric Squire of Erle Stoke, Wiltshire, and Cam's Hall, Hants. This Peter Delmé was a notable sportsman. He kept staghounds, foxhounds, and harriers on what was then thought a scale of great magnificence. He was the best gentleman-coachman of his day, and his three teams of grey, black, and cream were admitted to be unsurpassed by any in England. It was he who taught the Prince of Wales (afterwards George the Fourth) to handle the ribbons, and there were few better whips than Delmé's royal pupil. At his big house in Grosvenor Square, Squire Delmé had daily laid at 5 P.M. the best dinner that money and a first-rate French *chef* could provide for any eight of his friends who chose to put their names down, but the eccentric master of the feast seldom sat down with his guests unless some member of the Royal Family signified his intention of dining.

Some idea of his expenditure on his stables may be gathered from the fact that, after his death, ninety-five horses and ponies were sold at Tattersall's. He married a sister of the Earl of Carlisle, Lady Betty Howard, who was one of the reigning belles at the Court of Queen Charlotte, and whose beauty has been immortalised on canvas by both Reynolds and Romney. One of Squire Delmé's feats of driving, by the way, was his annual trip by tandem from London to Castle Howard, the seat of the Earl of Carlisle, a distance of over 300 miles, which he accomplished, with relays, in thirty hours.

So much for Frederick Peter's grandsire. His father was also a fine horseman and keen sportsman. He was in the 10th Hussars, the crack cavalry regiment of the day, of which the Prince Regent was Colonel, and had the honour of riding His Royal Highness's horses at Bibury. The Prince, with whom he was on terms of intimate friendship, had the greatest faith in Delmé-Radcliffe's jockeyship, and that his confidence was justified is proved by the fact that on several occasions the young Hussar beat those masters of the art, Sam Chiffney and Frank Buckle. He was, indeed, admitted to be the best gentleman-rider of his day. For many years he was Master of the Horse to George the Fourth and William the Fourth.

His son Ferderick Peter followed faithfully in the paternal footsteps, and, after leaving Eton and joining the Grenadier Guards, found scope for his prowess in the saddle as a gentleman jockey, in which capacity he held his own against Lord Wilton and all the best amateurs of the day.

Moreover, he early made his mark as a pigeon shot. He was one of the original members of the Red House Club at Battersea, which was the Hurlingham of its time, and was reckoned to be the very best of the 'young ones.' On one occasion he won the 'All England Stakes,' after five days' contest, from such cracks as Lord Kennedy, George Osbaldeston, Captain Horatio Ross, Colonel Anson, and in fact all the best shots in England. It was young Delmé-Radcliffe who, when a certain Mr Peareth, a dead shot, challenged the members of the Red House, took up the glove on behalf of the Club, when every one else had declined, and in a match at twenty-five picked blue rocks for £50 a side, won brilliantly by killing twenty-four to Mr Peareth's twenty-three. As a game shot, too, he was in the front rank.

Mr Delmé-Radcliffe had been eight years in the

Grenadier Guards when he succeeded, on the death of his father, to the family estates. Shortly afterwards, he distinguished himself in another capacity, by appearing on the hustings in support of Lord Grimston's candidature for Hertfordshire. Even those who knew Delmé-Radcliffe best, were amazed at his fluency and his readiness of retort. There was a raciness about his manner and diction which captivated the mob. He was a master of repartee and seldom failed to turn the tables on any one who tried to 'heckle' him. But he was not only a capital mob-orator, he was one of the best after-dinner speakers of his day, and could delight an audience of educated people by his refined and scholarly eloquence. Lord Lytton, the first and greatest of that name, on one occasion, at a great agricultural banquet where Delmé-Radcliffe had spoken with his usual brilliancy, paid him this high tribute. 'I am proud,' he said, 'to exhibit to Mr Dallas (the American minister, who was one of the guests) so rare a specimen of unrivalled combination of talents as that of a country gentleman able to hold his own in any field-sport with all his fellows, and no less qualified to take his seat in the cabinet of the statesman or the closet of the scholar and the philosopher.'

With gifts so eminently fitted to render him an invaluable acquisition to the House of Commons, it might have been confidently expected that Mr Delmé-Radcliffe would aspire to Parliamentary honours. But, though twice ardently pressed to stand for Hertfordshire, with an undertaking to pay every farthing of his expenses, he declined. The country and the sports which he loved had greater attractions for him than any that politics could offer.

As an all-round sportsman he had few equals. From the day when at Eton he caught the leviathan trout off the Cobler, whereof the tradition still lingers, he was an enthusiastic and skilful fisherman. As a game and pigeon shot I have already said that he was in the front rank. In respect to his shooting, the following anecdote is told. When out with a shooting party on his own estate, he got somewhat out of the line, and consequently received the contents of one of his guest's guns in the head and face. He fell senseless, and for a moment it was thought that he was killed. But in a few minutes he recovered consciousness, and, as soon as he did so, exclaimed earnestly: 'I call you all to witness it was my own fault.' The sight of his right eye was completely destroyed, but his other injuries were not serious. Even after the loss of his eye, Joe Manton, the well-known gunmaker, said he would not advise any one to offer Mr Delmé-Radcliffe many dead birds in a pigeon match.

As a yachtsman, too, he could hold his own against the best sailors of the Royal Squadron, and in his fine schooner, the *Fair Rosamond*, he made many long and adventurous cruises.

Moreover, he patronised the Turf, but was more successful as a gentleman-rider than as an owner, for he never owned anything better than a decent plater. The best of them was Vesper, whom he purchased for 350 guineas, and with whom, under her changed name of Lady Emily, he won in the course of three seasons twenty-two out of twenty-nine races, twenty of these ridden by himself.

But his heart was in the hunting-field, and there were few better judges of hounds and everything pertaining to the Chase than he. His apprenticeship was served with the Oakley in the palmy days of Lord Tavistock.

As a Master, his first venture was with a pack of dwarf foxhounds, which he entered to hare-hunting on his large estates at Hitchin. For three seasons he kept up what fox-hunters contemptuously call 'the currant jelly game,' then sold his harriers to Sir James Flower, took over Mr Thomas Sebright's foxhounds, and for five seasons hunted the Hertfordshire country, which embraced a portion of Bedfordshire.

The history of the Hertfordshire Hunt is a somewhat remarkable one. It was founded by the Marchioness of Salisbury, grandmother of the present Premier, who kept her hounds at Hatfield. Her ladyship was a veritable Amazon of the Chase. She turned out to hunt her own hounds "clad in bright blue habit with black collar and cuffs, and a hunting cap on her head." She was the hardest rider in the Hunt, and was frequently known, in the course of a good run, to distance the whole field, whilst her panting whippers-in toiled after her in vain. The Marchioness was fond of matching her hounds against those of rival Hunts, notably Mr Charles Calvert's, afterwards the Puckeridge. In 1828, finding that increasing years incapacitated her from active service in the saddle, she resigned the horn to Mr Thomas Sebright, at the same time making a present of her hounds to the county. Seven years later, in November 1835, this fine old lady-huntsman met with a tragic fate. She was burned to death at Hatfield, in a fire which entirely consumed one wing of that historic house, among the ruins of which her charred remains were found.

Mr Thomas Sebright hunted the Hertfordshire country till 1836, when he was succeeded by Mr Delmé-Radcliffe, the kennels having been removed from Hatfield to Kennesbourne Green near Harpenden, where they remained till Mr John Gerard Leigh signalised his Mastership by building, at his own expense, the present magnificent kennels at Luton Hoo in 1866.

For five seasons Mr Delmé-Radcliffe hunted the Hertfordshire country. 'Here,' says a writer in *Baily's Magazine*, with a good stock of old foxes and incessant labour in collecting an effective pack (at once drafting all but fifteen couples of that to which he succeeded), and in the second season having sixty-five couples, which by the next reached perfection, he showed an amount of sport quite incredible, and laid the foundation of a system admirably followed up by Lord Dacre, to whom, under a serious failure of health, Mr Delmé-Radcliffe resigned the hounds in 1839.'

It was during Mr Delmé-Radcliffe's Mastership of the Hertfordshire that the famous Wendover run took place. They found in Kensworth Gorse, and ran their fox some miles beyond Wendover, where they lost him in a rick-yard, after a thirty-mile run, during which Will Boxall, the huntsman, killed one very valuable mare and knocked up two other horses, the last being supplied to him by a farmer near Tring. The Hon. Edward Grimston, a terrific 'bruiser' (in the hunting sense), Mr Edward Daniel and James Simpkins, the first whip, were the only ones of a large field that were in at the finish of this extraordinary run. Mr Daniel's horse was so pumped out that he went blind. The fox was found the next morning dead under a faggot. In referring to this memorable event as a proof of the grand qualities of the 'Segrave blood,' Mr Delmé-Radcliffe tells us in 'The

Noble Science,' that it was a 'three o'clock fox,' and that when crossing the canal the pack were 'clustering as though all might have been included in a casting net.' From start to finish the distance was thirty miles, which Mr Delmé-Radcliffe asserted was covered in *two hours and twenty-eight minutes* 'without a hound missing: with a fox found after a severe morning's previous work: and, taking it altogether, it has been pronounced by the oldest Masters of Hounds and other high authorities as a run which will scarcely find a parallel in the records of any country.' Mr W. C. A. Blew, the able editor of the latest edition of the 'Noble Science' (1893), takes exception to Mr Delmé-Radcliffe's estimate of the time occupied in covering those thirty miles. 'With the greatest possible respect,' he says, 'for Mr Delmé-Radcliffe's memory and accuracy, it is possible, I venture to think, that in his unbounded admiration for the hounds of Lord Segrave's blood he has made some mistake in the distance or the time. If the hounds ran thirty miles in the time given, it is tolerably certain that the horses did not gallop at rather more than twelve miles an hour for more than two-and-a-half hours.'

For my own part, I regard with suspicion all wonderful 'times' in the old days. Look, for example, at the preposterous legends about Flying Childers, who is credited with covering the Beacon Course at Newmarket, four miles four furlongs thirteen yards, in seven minutes thirty seconds, and the Round Course, three miles four furlongs three yards, in six minutes forty seconds! That is to say, we are asked to believe that Flying Childers kept up for four miles and a half an average pace as fast almost as has ever been run by the highly-trained modern thoroughbred when a mile was the limit of the race! No one who has studied the annals of sport can place much faith in old-time 'clocking.' Whether the fault were in the watches or in those who held them I am not prepared to say, but it is a recognised fact now that the marvellous 'times' of yore will not bear the test of investigation. And, no doubt, Mr Blew is correct in his surmise that Mr Delmé-Radcliffe was mistaken either in the distance or the time. Still, make what deductions we will, it was an extraordinary run, and the author of 'The Noble Science' triumphantly adduces it as a proof, not only of the excellence of his favourite Segrave strain in hounds, but also of his pet theory that the thoroughbred makes the best hunter. 'My first whipper-in,' he says, 'was carried well to the finish and in a good place by a little entire thoroughbred chestnut horse of extraordinary power, measuring hardly 15 hands. This little horse had gone through a morning's work before the finding of an afternoon fox, and I will venture to say that nothing but *blood* could have gone through the *whole* of such a day.'

I may add that this run remained without a parallel in the history of the Hertfordshire Hunt until it was eclipsed in 1853, when they met at Broadwater, found at Whormalby Wood, and ran their fox for four-and-a-half hours, by which time every horse in the field was knocked up, and the hounds enjoyed their kill to themselves.

Mr Delmé-Radcliffe's ideas as to the pace of hounds sound somewhat exaggerated to modern ears. He mentions an instance in which hounds of his favourite 'Segrave blood' covered six miles in eighteen minutes, and asserts that foxhounds have beaten trained race-horses when the two have been matched. Probably the trial Mr Delmé-Radcliffe had in his mind when he wrote thus, was the following, given by the Rev. William Daniell in his *Rural Sports*.

Mr Daniell says: 'The speed of the foxhound was well ascertained by the trial at Newmarket between Mr Meynell and Mr Barry; and this account of the training and feeding the two victorious hounds is from the person who had the management of them. Will Crane was applied to after the match was made (which was for 500 guineas), to train Mr Barry's hounds, of which Blue Cap was four, and Wanton three years old. Crane objected to their being hounds which had been entered some seasons, and wished for young hounds which would, with more certainty, be taught to run a drag; however, the hounds were sent to Rivenhall in Essex; and, as Crane suggested, at the first trial to induce them to run the drag, they took no notice. At length, by dragging a fox along the ground, and then crossing the hounds upon the scent, and taking care to let them kill him, they became very handy to a drag, and had their exercise regularly three times a week upon Tiptree Heath. The chosen ground was turf and the distance over which the drag was taken was from eight to ten miles. The training commenced on the 1st of August 1762, and continued until the 28th of September (the 30th the match was run); their food was oatmeal and milk and sheep's trotters. Upon the 30th of September the drag was drawn (on account of running up the wind, which happened to be very brisk) from the rubbing-house at Newmarket Town End, to the rubbing-house at the starting point of the Beacon Course. The four hounds were then laid on the scent. Mr Barry's Blue Cap came in first, Wanton (very close to Blue Cap), second; Mr Meynell's

Richmond was beat by upwards of a hundred yards, and the bitch never run in at all. The ground was crossed in a few seconds more than eight minutes. Threescore horses started with the hounds. Cooper, Mr Barry's huntsman, was the first up, but the mare that carried him was rode quite blind at the conclusion. There were only twelve horses up out of the sixty; and Will Crane, who was mounted on a King's Plate horse called Rib, was in twelfth. The odds before running were seven to four in favour of Mr Meynell, whose hounds, it was said, were fed during the time of training entirely with legs of mutton.'

That can be hardly said, however, to bear out Mr Delmé-Radcliffe's contention that 'foxhounds have beaten trained racehorses when the two have been matched.'

'Mr Delmé-Radcliffe,' writes one who knew him well, 'had a pattern seat on horseback, and without being a 'bruiser' like his friend the Honourable Edward Grimston, could always bring his theory into practice and prove that he could ride, as well as write on the method of putting horses at their fences and keeping a place. He was in the first flight long after he had passed sixty.'

I have already alluded to Mr Delmé-Radcliffe's literary attainments, but they were so considerable that they deserve more extended notice. He was the author of some rattling hunting songs, which still hold their place in the literature of the Chase, and under the *nom de guerre* of 'The Country Squire,' he was well known as a contributor both in prose and verse to the journals of the time. When 'The Splendid Strollers,' Charles Dickens, Douglas Jerrold, John Forster & Co., performed Ben Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour' at Lord Lytton's seat, Knebworth, in 1850, Delmé-Radcliffe was asked to write the epilogue, and he acquitted himself so brilliantly of the task that the Right Hon. John Wilson Croker, in his speech at the Annual Dinner of the Literary Fund, shortly afterwards, paid him this high compliment: 'The whole Punch party have been fairly beaten at their own weapons by "The Country Squire," associated with them in theatricals at Knebworth, and were I called upon to bestow the prize for the greatest amount of wit and pungency, I should not hesitate to award it to the Knebworth epilogue.'

In 1869, when Mrs Beecher Stowe made her monstrous accusation against Lord Byron, Delmé-Radcliffe rushed chivalrously into print in defence of the poet's sister, whose fair fame was so atrociously aspersed. His eloquent and indignant letter to the *Daily Telegraph* created a sensation, and is thus referred to in *Blackwood's Magazine*, where a touching allusion is made to the death of Mr Delmé-Radcliffe's eldest son, a gallant officer of the Scots Fusiliers, who fell while leading his men up the slopes of the Alma. The passage is worth quoting, and I therefore subjoin it.

'Mrs Stowe might perhaps fancy that the lapse of more than half a century, and the death of nearly every one of those illustrious men whose friendship for Byron is matter of history, would secure her foul calumny from challenge. Happily this is not so. The age of chivalry is not past. The blood that beat high on the field of Crecy, and that was freely, and alas! fatally, poured out at the Alma, brooks no concealment, seeks no shield under a *nom de plume*. Mr Delmé-Radcliffe in a letter which he addressed to the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, at once denounced the "True Story" as "a lie—an odious, damned lie; upon my soul a lie—a wicked lie." "Such," he says, "is the burst of indignation with which Emilia repudiates the foul aspersion of Iago on the spotless fame of the gentle Desdemona. Such is the reply to Mrs Stowe on the lips of all to whom the memory of Mrs Leigh is dear, and dear it must be to all who knew her, as I did, nurtured under her wing, and having from childhood throughout her lifetime occupied a position little less than that of a son in her family."'

Six years after thus breaking a lance in defence of an injured lady's honour, on the 30th of November 1875, Frederick Peter Delmé-Radcliffe died at Hitchin Priory, Hertfordshire, in his seventy-second year.

It is, of course, mainly on 'The Noble Science' that his fame as an author rests. This has long been recognised as a standard work, and Lord Fitzhardinge, than whom it would have been difficult to find a better judge, declared that its author was the best theoretical huntsman that ever lived. Mr Delmé-Radcliffe's style is no doubt somewhat too diffuse and discursive for the taste of the present day, and some of his views are obsolete, but still 'The Noble Science,' edited and annotated up to date as it has been by Mr W. C. A. Blew, cannot fail to fascinate every sportsman who takes an intelligent interest in the science of fox-hunting.

George W Fitzwilliam

THE FITZWILLIAMS.

'How dared you, Master Fitzwilliam, receive in your house so great an enemy to the State?'

'May it please your Highness, his Excellency the Cardinal hath ever been my good friend and benefactor. All that I have and am owe I to his favour and interest, and I had surely been less than man had I refused lodging and welcome to him when wandering in misfortune.'

'And you would, then, risk your King's displeasure to do a service to his greatest enemy?

'Nay, your Highness, I meant no contempt for your Highness, but only gratitude and good service to him from whose hand I have had so many benefits and who surely needed the offices of a friend more than ever in his misfortune and disgrace.'

'By my faith, Master Fitzwilliam, I would that *I* had servants as loyal and faithful to me as thou hast been to my lord Cardinal. Kneel down, Master Fitzwilliam.'

The honest merchant went on his knees, and when he rose it was as Sir William Fitzwilliam, Knight.

The king whose displeasure he had braved was Henry the Eighth. The Cardinal whom he had welcomed under his roof at Milton Manor, Northamptonshire, was the great Thomas Wolsey, then banished from Court in disgrace. Wolsey had the knack of endearing to himself all who had served him. Those who have read his life, written by his gentleman-usher, William Cavendish, will remember how even his jester Patch preferred sharing his old master's fallen fortunes to taking lucrative service under the King, and had to be removed by force to the royal palace. William Fitzwilliam had been Treasurer and High Chamberlain to Wolsey when the Cardinal was at the zenith of his power, and he so loved and honoured his old master that he was ready to dare all consequences rather than shut his doors upon the fallen minister, when, in the pathetic guise of 'an old man broken with the storms of state,' he passed on his melancholy journey northwards. And those consequences might well have been fatal. For, to beard Bluff Harry in his wrath was to run imminent risk of parting with one's head as well as one's pelf. But the much-married monarch had his good points. He could appreciate honesty and loyalty, even though displayed towards an enemy, and Master William Fitzwilliam's sturdy defence of his conduct towards his old friend and master turned out to be the best card he could possibly have played.

It was this Sir William Fitzwilliam who was the real founder of the great family of the Fitzwilliams. There are legendary Fitzwilliams, of course, who loom mythically and mistily from the days of Edward the Confessor. But the fame and fortunes of the house sprang from this honest, stout-hearted merchant, Alderman of Bread Street Ward, and sometime Sheriff of London, who made his money as a trader in the city, and was so successful as to be able to purchase, first, Gainspark in Essex, and then Milton Manor in Northamptonshire.

the estate and lordship whereof he bought of Richard Whittlebury in the year 1506.

He was an excellent specimen of the thrifty English merchant of the time, a man who, with a keen eye to the main chance, combined a genuine love of mercy and justice. He left an immense fortune, a large portion of which was bequeathed in charity. Being not only a person of substance, but also of ancient Norman stock, his friendship was cultivated by men of high birth and breeding. His eldest daughter married Sir Thomas Brudenell of Deene, an ancestor of Lord Cardigan, and of the present Marquis of Ailesbury. His second daughter became the wife of Sir Anthony Coke of Gedney Hall, Essex, and *her* daughter Mildred, whom old Roger Ascham, Latin Secretary to Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth, pronounced to be one of the best Greek scholars of her time, was the second wife of William Cecil, the Lord Burghley of Elizabethan fame, and mother of Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury, from whom the present Premier traces his descent.

The Fitzwilliams have ever been a manly and capable race. The grandson of the first Sir William was for nine and thirty years Viceroy of Ireland, and one of the ablest of Queen Elizabeth's many able public servants. As Governor of Fotheringay Castle, he had the ill-used Mary Queen of Scots under his charge, and treated her with a kindness and courtesy which so touched her heart that, on the eve of her execution, she thanked him with many tears, and, as a token of her gratitude, presented him with a portrait of her son, which is to this day preserved as an heirloom in the family. With this Sir William Fitzwilliam commenced that long connection of the house with Ireland which has not since been broken, for, at this moment, the Fitzwilliams own no less than 92,000 acres of land in Ireland, from which the reputed revenue is £50,000. His grandson was created first Baron Fitzwilliam of Lifford in the peerage of Ireland in 1620, and the third Baron was created Viscount Milltown of West Meath and Earl Fitzwilliam of Tyrone in 1716. But it was not until the reign of George II that the Fitzwilliams became peers of the United Kingdom. The third Irish Earl and fifth Baron was created Viscount Milton and Earl Fitzwilliam of Norborough, Northamptonshire, on the 24th of June 1746, and married the daughter of Thomas Watson Wentworth, first Marquis of Rockingham. This marriage had important consequences for the Fitzwilliams. For, when Charles Watson Wentworth, second Marquis of Rockingham, celebrated both as a statesman and a sportsman, died in 1782 without issue, he bequeathed his vast Yorkshire estates, including Wentworth House, to his nephew, Charles William, Earl Fitzwilliam, who thus added upwards of £40,000 a year to his revenues.

With Charles William Wentworth, the second English and fifth Irish Earl, the great renown of the Fitzwilliams in the hunting-field commenced. Born in 1748, he succeeded to the title in his ninth year, and from his boyhood showed a passion for the Chase. It was probably in 1769, when he came of age, that he first started the now famous Milton pack, which he purchased from Mr Foley and Mr Crewe (afterwards Lord Crewe), who had bought them of Mr Child, the banker, who hunted Oxfordshire with them for many years, having in his turn taken the hounds from Lord Thanet, who had also hunted the same shire with them when it was a perfectly open country.

When Lord Fitzwilliam bought the hounds from Mr Foley and Mr Crewe, he took them away from Oxfordshire to Milton, and Will Deane, who had been first whip, accompanied them as huntsman. Deane was one of the first great huntsmen whose names are enrolled on the scroll of fame. He had been brought up under the famous Will Crane, who is, I think, absolutely the first huntsman of note of whom there is any record, and who used to say in his later days, 'I won't boast of my own qualifications, but this I can say, that I've formed the best huntsman in England—that's Will Deane.' Deane appears to have thoroughly deserved this encomium. He was as civil as he was sensible, and though he very seldom resorted to other kennels for fresh blood, always excepting Mr Foljambe's, yet his judgment in the breeding of hounds was generally admitted to be sound.

'The Druid,' however, has a very different story to tell. He says that the hounds under Deane were so wild that they were never known to hold a scent for half a mile, and so fat that they couldn't kill a fox when they found one. The establishment was splendid, the stud magnificent, being chiefly drafted from the racing stables. There was everything that money could provide *except sport*, and that was wanting, solely through Deane's utter ignorance of his business. What authority 'The Druid' had for this sweeping statement he does not say. But one can hardly accept it as correct in face of the fact that the memorable match between Earl Fitzwilliam's and Mr Meynell's hounds took place in Will Deane's time. The great Leicestershire magnate brought ten picked couples, the flower of his kennel, from Kimbolton Castle to the tryst at Hunts Closes, and at the end of a fast forty minutes, when the hounds were stopped, the two Milton cracks, Darter and the original Druid, had secured first and second honours for Lord Fitzwilliam. Now, Mr Meynell's hounds were reputed the best in England, and to have beaten them was a great feather in Will Deane's cap, a feat which, to my thinking, utterly disposes of the charge of incompetency brought against him by 'The Druid.'

When the Earl succeeded to the Wentworth estates in 1782 he also started a hunting establishment in Yorkshire, and his magnificent seat, Wentworth House, became a great centre of the noble sport. There he built stables and kennels unsurpassed in the three kingdoms, and hunted the country in that princely style which has always been a characteristic feature of the sportsmen of his race. It was here that, in 1789, he entertained the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV) with a splendour that suggested

> 'The wealth of Ormus or of Ind,
> Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
> Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.'

And not only was Royalty thus superbly catered for, but no less than 40,000 persons, assembled by invitation in the beautiful park, partook of the Earl's lavish hospitality.

But, though his heart was in the hunting-field, Lord Fitzwilliam felt that duty called him into the less congenial sphere of politics. A Whig of the good old school, and the lifelong friend of Charles James Fox, he was, nevertheless, broad-minded enough to appreciate the genius and policy of Pitt, and it was the latter who sent him to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant in 1794. Seldom, if ever, has any Irish Viceroy been so popular as Earl Fitzwilliam. Unfortunately, owing to a misunderstanding on the subject of Catholic Emancipation, of which he was a strong supporter, he found himself unable to retain office under Pitt, and sent in his resignation. The news was received with the profoundest regret all over Ireland. 'The day of his departure from Dublin,' says Lord Stanhope, in his *Life of Pitt*, 'was one of general gloom: the shops were shut; no business of any kind was transacted; and the greater part of the citizens put on mourning; while some of the most respectable among them drew his coach down to the water side.' Although at one time, about 1812, he was spoken of as a possible Whig Premier, his name did not again come very prominently before the public, until his violent denunciation of the conduct of the magistrates who ordered the charge of Yeomanry which dispersed the Manchester Reform Meeting on the 16th of August, 1819, and resulted in the deplorable and shameful Peterloo Massacre. So strong was Lord Fitzwilliam's language that the Government felt compelled to take notice of it, and he was removed from the Lord-Lieutenancy of the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Thenceforward he devoted himself, with more zest than ever, to the pleasures of the Chase. In 1821 additional lustre was shed on the Fitzwilliam Hunt at Milton, by the presence of Tom Sebright, who in that year became huntsman, and for forty years carried the horn 'with credit and renown.' As Tom is undoubtedly the one great heroic figure in the history of the Fitzwilliam hounds, I shall make no apology for giving a brief sketch of his career.

His father, also Tom, had been entered to hounds under that fine sportsman, Mr Corbet of Shropshire, and had as his brother whip the immortal Tom Moody, whilst Stephen Goodall, first of a famous family, was huntsman. The elder Sebright subsequently hunted the New Forest, and young Tom was born at Stowe-on-the-Wold in the year 1789. He used to say that his appetite for hunting was first whetted by running afoot after Mr Villebois' hounds, when that good sportsman hunted the Romsey side of Old Hampshire. At the age of fifteen Tom was duly entered as second whip with 'Jack' Musters, who noted his firm hand and quick eye to hounds. It was early to begin the active duties of the hunting-field, but others have begun earlier: Jem Hills, for example, who was only ten when he commenced whipping-in to the Duke of Dorset's Harriers, and George Carter, who was also but ten when he was installed as second whip to Mr Selby Lowndes' hounds.

From the Annesley kennels Tom went to Sir Mark Sykes, who was then hunting the North Riding with Mr Legard. But the young whip's hard riding didn't suit his Yorkshire patrons, and when 'Squire' Osbaldeston came there after the drafts which he wished to add to his own purchases, Mr Legard said to him, 'You may take the whip as well: we've tried him three seasons, and he kills all our horses.' The 'Squire' took them at their word, and Tom Sebright accompanied him to Leicestershire, where the pair immortalised themselves by their prowess in the field and their judgment in the kennel.

It was in 1821 that Tom Sebright took the horn at Milton under circumstances thus related by 'The Druid,' who adds a pleasant picture of Tom in the exercise of his duties :—

Mr John Moore recommended him to Earl Fitzwilliam as successor to John Clark, and he hunted this celebrated pack for exactly forty seasons. He came in March, and the first meet was at Bedford Purlieus; but the hounds kept changing their foxes, and his lordship decided to have a turn at Sutton Wood. Tom rode Thorney that day, and the decision with which he lifted his hounds for five hundred yards over the plough, and did not allow his fox to dwell for an instant in Abbot's Wood, made the old hands say, "There's no mistake about our new man." Monk's Wood and Bedford Purlieus were latterly very different from what they had been in the dykeless days of Will Deane, when horses had fairly to skip from one sound bit of ground to another in the Ridings, and Tom found no better place for making hounds steady. Aversley Wood foxes had always an honourable mention, and he looked upon them as quite the wildest and the best. The Soke of Peterborough, with its Castor Hanglands and Upton Wood, was a very favourite place for his infant school in the autumn. "When there was a scent," he used to say, "hounds run as well there as anywhere;" but, taking the season through, he leant to Barnwell Wold. Of Morehay Lawn he was also very fond, and it was there that he entered George Carter to the country, three weeks before the season closed, in the April of '45.

'We loved to stroll out with the old man and the hounds into Milton Park, and, by judiciously leading up to her, induce him to talk of "Relish," a name which he used to pronounce with as much unction as Robert Hall was wont to throw into "Mesopotamia"; and we mischievously got him to say it for the last time, just before we bade him good-bye on the show-ground at Yarm. He was one of those fine sterling characters which well repaid the study; and the whole place and its accessories seemed so exactly in keeping with him.

The rick-backed church with its crooked wooden belfry, the Foxhounds sign nailed to the elm, and straggling thorn clumps at the edge of the Park, over which, under a cold December sky, the withered clematis was hanging in rich tracery like the veil of a bride, the Nen creeping on its 'lazy Scheldt-like' course along the broad meadows of Overton, the white sun-dial on the wall of the steward's house, and the quaint intermixture of the martello tower with the thatch and the ivy at the kennels, all blended so thoroughly with him and his honest pride of being part and parcel of an old English home.

'During the summer he spent nearly all his time among "my lambs," and cared very little to wander afield. The Yarborough, Beaufort, and Belvoir kennels were what he principally used; but, during his last two seasons, he deeply dipped into Mr Selby Lowndes' Royal, an old-fashioned looking dog, and rather wild in his work. "*Ah! my lad, the dam is the secret*," was his constant remark to young huntsmen. Like most reserved men, he was tough in his opinion, both in the field and the kennel, and no one but the boiler knew what the puppies were by, till they were ready to go out to quarters. He hung much to the notion that two negatives would make a positive both in style of work and make. It was delightful to hear him tell, when you asked after the cream of the entry, that they were "perhaps just the most beautiful I ever had," and believing himself most implicitly summer after summer. If he was showing one of his hounds which he thought a little out of the common way, he would indicate his delight by thrusting his hands deep into his breeches pockets and kicking out his right leg. He would then draw his hand over the hound from head to stern and remark in his gentle tone, that "it couldn't be more beautiful of it had been spoke-shaved."'

Tom Sebright was a model huntsman in the field. His manner was particularly courteous and pleasing, and when some impatient 'thrusters' showed a disposition to press upon the hounds, his mild, respectful, 'Hold hard, gentlemen, pray hold hard,' had a more prompt effect than any volley of oaths.

In the autumn of 1860 Tom received a very gratifying tribute to his worth, in the shape of 800 sovereigns presented to him in a silver cup by the Duke of Manchester at a crowded public meeting held at the Huntingdon Town Hall. So hale, hearty and strong did he look, as he stood up in his scarlet coat, with green plush collar, his dark corduroys and polished tops, to acknowledge modestly the handsome gift, that no one would have dreamt that his career would close so soon. But a bad fall from a grey mare he was riding resulted in injuries which, though they did not immediately incapacitate him from hunting, produced a terrible hacking cough which no one who heard it could doubt to be his death-knell. His accustomed seat in the parish church, from which for years he had never been absent on Sunday mornings, soon knew him no more—he felt that the cough, which he could not suppress, was an annoyance to the congregation. Then one day, while he was taking the hounds for exercise, he turned suddenly sick with a sharp pain in his side, had to come home, was only just able to get out of the saddle and stagger upstairs to his bed, from which he never again rose. 'The Druid' gives this pathetic picture of the fine old huntsman's last hours:—

'His son Harry and his son-in-law helped to nurse him by turns, and sat up with him the night before he died; and fresh water from the pump was all he longed for. They saw that there was no hope; but still his appetite seemed suddenly to return, and when his dinner was brought him next day he did think it "looked like business." Once more he hoped for life: "See what a dinner I've eaten; I shall be up in three weeks; I don't want to leave you yet." He then insisted, as it was Sunday, on having two glasses of wine, as usual, to drink his time-honoured toasts, "A good health to you all," and "The Master of the Hounds." "That's not enough to drink Mr Fitzwilliam's health in, Winifred," when she only poured out half a glass, but he could do little more than taste it when it was given to him. The toast he had drunk Sunday after Sunday for those forty seasons made him wander back to the hounds. "Don't you see them?" he said to his daughter, "they're all round my bed. There's old Bluecap and Shiner, and Bonny Lass wagging her stern." "No, no, father," she replied, "you are mistaken." "Ah! they're gone now; strange, isn't it, I should see them so plain? Oh, dear! my eyes deceive me; they're only flies."

'The window was open, and the sound of the church bell floated into the room. In his days of health it had never struck on his ear in vain, and he spoke to his little grandchild and told her not to be late. "Are you dressed for church, Harry?" he said to his son, who sat and watched him at the bedside, but he was hardly conscious of the answer, and almost before the bell was done his own last summons had been given and obeyed.'

Meanwhile, two Earls Fitzwilliam, under whom he had served, had predeceased Tom Sebright. The founder of the Milton Hunt died on the 8th of February 1833, at the patriarchal age of eighty-five. Only one notable incident stands out in his later life, and that was his second marriage, which took place on the 21st of July 1823. The bride, Louisa, Dowager-Baroness Ponsonby of Imokilly, was seventy-one and the bridegroom seventy-five. But the story went that they had been sweethearts in their young days, had been separated by a hard fate, and when at last both were free, finding that the old, old love of long ago was not dead, they married. A pretty story of two faithful lovers!

Under his son and successor the sporting traditions of Milton and Wentworth House were magnificently sustained. When the latter died in 1857, his vast estates, with a rental of £150,000, were by his will divided into three unequal parts. The Milton estate, worth £40,000 a year, was bequeathed to his second surviving son, the Hon. George Wentworth Fitzwilliam, an enthusiastic lover of the Chase, who kept up the old Hunt in the same liberal and sportsmanlike style. On his death in 1874 Mr H. Wickham became Master of the Milton pack.

The present Earl Fitzwilliam, on succeeding to the title in 1857, started a pack of foxhounds at Wentworth, with drafts from Milton, to hunt a little tract of country between the Badsworth and the Grove. Right in the heart of the manufacturing and colliery districts, a more unpromising hunting country could not well be imagined, yet with his 45 couples of hounds the Earl manages to show good sport three days a week, and, though now in his 84th year, is as keen for the Chase as his famous grandsire at the same age.

The hereditary love of hunting among the Fitzwilliams is conspicuous in his second son, the Hon. Henry Wentworth Fitzwilliam. Born in 1840, and educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, Mr Fitzwilliam was early entered to hounds under the mentorship of old Tom Sebright. When he went up to Cambridge, he started the draghounds, of which he was Master during his University career. I remember well the excitement among sporting graduates and undergraduates over the revival of steeplechasing at Cottenham, largely due to his exertions and those of his friend, Mr Nathan de Rothschild, who presented the 'Varsity with a handsome challenge whip to be run for annually over three miles of fair hunting country. And there was the great Inter-'Varsity Steeplechase at Aylesbury in 1863, when the Light Blues scored a brilliant triumph, securing first, second, and third places, and Mr Fitzwilliam owned the winner and rode the second horse, also his own property. Later on, both at the Curragh and Punchestown, Mr Fitzwilliam proved himself a fine horseman. His great jump over the big double, when he won the Conyngham Cup at Punchestown, is still remembered with admiration. He has never, I believe, been without a pack of harriers, and for some years he hunted the Fitzwilliam hounds in Yorkshire.

No sketch of the Fitzwilliam Hunt would be complete without mention of good old George Carter, who for more than forty years carried the horn to these hounds. In 1872 George received a very handsome recognition of his services in the form of a testimonial presented to him at a dinner given at the Angel Hotel, when Lord Kesteven, as chairman, handed him a noble silver cup with the following inscription: 'Presented to George Carter after twenty-seven years' service, sixteen as whipper-in and eleven as huntsman of the Fitzwilliam Hounds, together with £763 in money, from the subscriptions of three hundred and seventy-eight friends and well-wishers, in acknowledgment of his merits as a huntsman, and of his constant and successful endeavours to show sport. 30th October 1872.'

But George lived to carry the horn for another fifteen years, until his final retirement in 1887. He died in 1894, a fine specimen of the best type of huntsman.

On the retirement of Mr H. Wickham in 1892, after eighteen years' Mastership, Mr Joshua Fielden hunted the pack for three seasons, when he was succeeded by the present Master, Mr George Charles Wentworth Fitzwilliam, and thus, after an interregnum of one-and-twenty years, the Fitzwilliam Hounds once more had a Fitzwilliam at their head. Mr Fitzwilliam is the only son of the late Hon. George Wentworth Fitzwilliam, and was born in 1866. On leaving Eton he entered the Royal Horse Guards (Blue), but retired from the regiment on attaining the rank of lieutenant. Subsequently he became captain in the Oxfordshire Militia, but has now given up soldiering altogether. He is a J.P. for Northamptonshire, and was High Sheriff of the County in 1894. At an alarming crisis, when the famous old pack was threatened with extinction for want of a Master, Mr Fitzwilliam, like the good sportsman he is, sacrificed his personal inclinations and undertook the Mastership himself, with the able assistance of Mr C. B. E. Wright, ex-Master of the Badsworth, who relieves him of most of the technical duties. In these capable hands there need be no fear that the future of the Fitzwilliam Hunt will be less brilliant than its past.

COLONEL ANSTRUTHER THOMSON.

IT is not always 'the siller' that draws Scotsmen from their native land to England. The love of sport has sent many a gallant Scot from 'Caledonia stern and wild' to the green pastures and glorious galloping-grounds of the South. And, to do him justice, the Scot has left his mark as a sportsman whenever he has invaded the country of the Southron. The achievements of Scottish prowess in the saddle are writ large in the annals of Leicestershire. No harder rider than Sir David Baird ever led the Quorn, and the 'golden age' of Melton owed much of its glory to men like Lord Kennedy, Captain Ross, Captain Douglas, Captain Maxse and their 'brither Scots' whose names have cropped up from time to time in these pages. But none of them all, I think, stood out as a bolder or more striking figure in the English hunting-field than the subject of my present sketch, Colonel John Anstruther Thomson.

Born at Charleton in the 'Kingdom of Fife,' on the 8th of August 1818, John Anstruther Thomson can boast descent from one of the oldest families in Scotland. He is twentieth in direct descent from William de Candela, Lord of Anstruther, and heir of the line of the St Clairs, Earls of Orkney. His father, who added the name of Thomson to that of Anstruther on succeeding

John Turnbull Thomson

to the Charleton estate, was for many years Master of the Fife Hounds, and at the age of thirteen the son was regularly entered to the sport at Dunraden by John Walker, one of the most famous of Scottish huntsmen. When his school-days at Eton were over, young Anstruther Thomson travelled on the Continent with a tutor, and in March 1836 joined the 9th Lancers, a regiment which prided itself on its hunting renown, and numbered at that time amongst its officers some of the finest riders in the three kingdoms. The young cornet soon showed that he could hold his own with the best of them as a horseman, whilst in keenness for the sport he surpassed them all. For, when the regiment was ordered to India, rather than forego the delights of the hunting-field, he exchanged into the 13th Light Dragoons, then quartered at Ipswich, and there started a pack of staghounds *with his Colonel as whipper-in*, with which he showed grand sport. His next quarters were at Hampton Court, and there he hunted a pack of beagles, with which he drove the market-gardeners of Brentford into open revolt; for, there was an old jack-hare which made those gardens his haunt and twice defied all the efforts of the pack to kill him. But the persevering Scot, not to be beaten, and regardless of the uproar among the gardeners, went for his quarry for the third time and killed him. After which the market-gardens had peace.

When the regiment was ordered to Exeter Mr Anstruther Thomson had his beagles carted thither and made things warm for the Devonshire hares. He also hunted with Mr Russell's foxhounds, and was in the memorable run through seventeen parishes when they ran their fox from 12.30 to 5 P.M. before they killed him.

From Exeter the 13th were moved to Ireland, and at Cahir Mr Anstruther again organised a pack of staghounds, this time with *two* Colonels (Lamerton and Felton) as his whips. In 1847 he was making things lively with the Kildare, and then he sold out and devoted himself entirely to the sport which he so passionately loved.

Mr Charles Colville had just vacated the Atherstone country, and Mr Anstruther Thomson succeeded him in the Mastership. The oldest member of the Hunt could not recall anything to compare with the sport which 'the long Scotch gentleman' showed them. On New-Year's day 1849 they had their famous run from Appleby Gorse, when the hounds, with Stephen Goodall and Stephen Shepheard close up, *twice* swam the Thames. After a brief interlude, during which he hunted his father's country in Fife, Mr Anstruther Thomson returned to the Atherstone, and remained with them for five seasons.

Thence he went to the Bicester, and it was during his two seasons' Mastership there that the great run from Claydon Woods, over Marsh Gibbon and Brill Hill to the Quarters in Oxfordshire, took place, sixteen miles from point to point in one hour and twenty minutes without a check. The Master was splendidly carried by his grand hunter Maximus, whose form on this occasion caused him to fetch 680 guineas when he was put up for sale at Tattersall's. But, though Mr Anstruther Thomson and a little band of five other bold and well-mounted horsemen saw the best part of the run, not one of them was in at the finish, for the pace of the hounds was too much for them.

Once more this roving Scot returned to Fifeshire with the avowed intention of staying there. But when Lord Spencer resigned the Mastership of the Pytchley in 1864, Mr Anstruther Thomson received the following letter from his old friend Major Whyte Melville, which upset his plans:—

'*Wootton Hall, Feb. 26th*, 1864.

'MY DEAR JACK,—Under the influence of a ripping fifty minutes over grass, up wind, and all just as it ought to be, I write you a line as a feeler about our country. I have only just heard that you have really given up the "Fife." I know your habits so well that I am quite sure that you will not be happy without a pack of hounds; and, indeed, the longer I live the more cause I have to agree with Mr Jorrocks "that all time is wasted that is not spent in hunting." Now, do you think that you would like this Pytchley country? We shall have no Master after this season, as Spencer has quite decided to give the hounds up. You know the "pros" and the "cons" of the Pytchley as well as I do. It has the best woodlands in the world. You can hunt from August to May, both inclusive, as they say. The disadvantage is the crowd on a Wednesday, which you also know, from your experience with the Atherstone, does not do half the mischief it appears as if it ought to do. If there is a scent it is soon disposed of; if not, you have to feel your way. From what I see, I am sure that if you care to take the country you will be well supported. I am not, however, writing under authority, only between ourselves. We have a capital pack of hounds, although it is the fashion to abuse them. They can hunt as well as race. I think that you would enjoy riding over these grass fields as much as the hunting in the deep woodlands on the Kettering side.

'Don't tell Mrs Thomson that I am trying to tempt you here or I shall be in disgrace with her; and of course, if you did come to us, no one in Fife would ever speak to me again. I should much like to see you here, but that, of course, is as much from private and "mahogany" motives as from my good opinion of your "rat-catching" qualities. I should like it if it could come off.

'Ever, my dear Jack,
Yours very truly,
'GEORGE WHYTE MELVILLE.'

There was no resisting such an appeal, so to the Pytchley John Anstruther Thomson went, and carried all before him. His bright, winning smile and singular charm of manner won all hearts—his bold and skilful horsemanship fairly 'witched' the Northampton squires. And, with such a galaxy of hunting talent as Charles Payne, Dick Rooke, and Tom Firr to shed brilliance on his kennels, it is not surprising that the new Master gave them during his five seasons an average of daily sport which has never before or since been equalled.

The red-letter day of his memorable reign was the never-to-be-forgotten 2nd of February 1866, when the great *Waterloo Run*, one of the classic events in the annals of the Chase, threw all previous exploits of the Pytchley into the shade. They found at Waterloo Gorse, and ran eighteen miles over the finest part of the Pytchley and Tailby countries in one hour and fifty minutes without a check, crossing only three ploughed fields in all that distance. Then came the first check. Neither of the whips was up with the hounds, for both had been stalled off by the pace. But the Master, with no one to turn the hounds to him, nevertheless, unaided, kept them on one line, if not always on the same fox, for three hours and a half, till, with scent and light alike failing, he stopped them at Medbourne Station as the railway clock pointed to half-past five. During that long and trying time Mr Anstruther Thomson had ridden three horses to a standstill, and though he fell several times, yet was never out of the way when he was wanted. When the hounds were stopped they were nineteen miles from their kennels, but, with the assistance of Captain Clerk of Spratton, the Master got them safely home to Brixworth by 10 P.M. At 10.50 he sat down to dinner, and at 11.15 he drove off to the Hunt Ball at Market Harborough. The fame of his great feat had preceded him, and when he entered the ball-room he received such an ovation as few, if any, Masters of Hounds have ever experienced.

In estimating this and other exploits of his in the saddle, it must be remembered that Mr Anstruther Thomson stood 6 feet 3 inches, and rode over 16 stone. In consequence of his weight and bulk he found it expedient to crash through, rather than fly, the Northamptonshire fences. 'His nerve,' says Mr Nethercote, 'in plunging into a brook, chancing the bottom and struggling on to the opposite bank, was a sight to watch rather than a tempting example to follow.'

In 1869, amid universal expressions of sincere regret, 'the long Scotch gentleman,' who had shown such magnificent sport as will never be forgotten in Northamptonshire, announced his intention of resigning the Mastership of the Pytchley. At a great dinner given at the George Hotel, Northampton, Colonel Lloyd-Lindsay (afterwards Lord Wantage) on behalf of 375 subscribers, presented the retiring Master with his portrait by Sir Francis Grant, and concluded an eloquent speech by describing Mr Anstruther Thomson as 'one of the finest horsemen, one of the most gallant sportsmen, one of the most kind, urbane, and courteous gentlemen that ever galloped over the grass fields of Northamptonshire.' Tom Firr, his late second whip, then huntsman of the North Warwickshire, sang, to the tune of 'A fine old Englishman,' a song of his own composition in praise of Captain Anstruther Thomson and his famous wall-eyed hunter Iris, which fairly brought down the house and was received with rapturous cheers. And so, in a blaze of triumph, and amid enthusiastic demonstrations of admiration and gratitude, John Anstruther Thomson took his farewell of the Pytchley.

Once more, for a single season in 1870, he reappeared in the Midlands to hunt the Atherstone country. Then he retired to Torquay for the sake of his wife's health. In 1872 he returned to Scotland, and from that year till 1890 hunted the Fife country, which was so closely associated with his own and his father's name.

In his sketch of the Colonel's brilliant rule over the Pytchley, Mr Nethercote tells the following anecdote:—

'Among the numerous canine incidents which have crossed the path of Mr Anstruther Thomson, not the least amusing must have been one which occurred in company with the present writer. Driving together near Buxton, they were encountered by the length and breadth of so unsavoury an odour as was only to be attributed to horse-flesh slightly tainted. "Hounds, by Jove!" exclaimed the ex-M.F.H. "Let us get out and have a look." No sooner said than done. Crossing an orchard, among the boughs of which were hung the joints which had so robbed the circumambient air of its natural sweetness, a kennel was soon espied.

'Addressing a light, neat-looking man who was digging his garden close to the kennel, he was asked if we could be permitted to see the hounds. "Certainly, gentlemen," was the reply in rich Irish brogue. "I'm the huntsman, and will show them with pleasure." Laying down his spade and putting on his coat, he opened the kennel door and let out about as miscellaneous a looking lot of dwarf foxhounds as might be found in a long day's march. "You will be pleased to know," said I, "that you are showing your pack to the best judge of hounds in England—a gentleman of whom you have probably often heard—Colonel Anstruther Thomson."

'"Oh, indeed have I," was the answer. "Colonel *Atherstone* Thomson! Why of course I have, and being it's he, I don't mind telling him that he is now looking at the worst pack of hounds in England! They're called the Lyme Harriers, and there's scarce a decent hound in the lot. When I take them out of a morning, they'll suddenly start off in full cry, and run three or four miles after nothing at all."

'Greatly amused at this confession of the shortcomings of his pack, one of the better-looking members was pointed out, and he was subjected to the question. "That's a good hound, to judge by appearances. What about him, eh?"

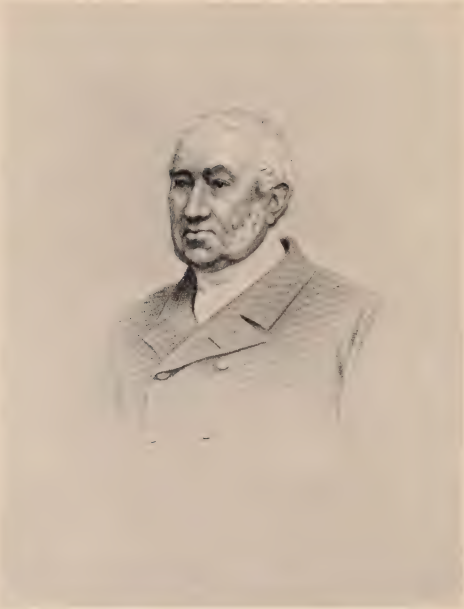
'"Well, gentlemen, I'll just tell you. He'll go ten times round the same field doing nothing; and then he'll stop and scratch; and the worst of it is that some of the gentlemen who belong to the Hunt, though they are devils to ride, call it beautiful questing.'

'"But why don't you get another situation?"

'"Indeed and I must, gentlemen, for I cannot stand it any longer; but a place is hard to find nowadays. I was some years huntsman to a pack of hounds in County Carlow, but I can't go back there, for Ireland is a lost country. If you can help me in finding a new situation I will take it as a kindness." Promising to help, if it were possible, we took leave of our ill-suited friend, as clean, nice and well-mannered a servant as any Master of Harriers might wish to have for a huntsman.'

In the year 1881 Colonel Anstruther Thomson (he bears that rank as commanding officer of the 1st Fifeshire Light Horse) brought together under his own roof at Slough, during the Ascot week, two veteran celebrities of the hunting-field whom he had long wished to introduce to one another. They were the Rev. John Russell, then aged eighty-six, and Mr J. H. Whyte Melville, father of the novelist, and sometime Master of the Fife hounds, who had just completed his eighty-fourth year. Their host declared that it was the most delightful meeting he ever witnessed. The two venerable sportsmen were the life and soul of the party, and kept their listeners entranced by their vivid and racy stories of the sport in which both had so signally distinguished themselves.

Colonel Anstruther Thomson is now in his eighty-first year, hale and hearty and vigorous, as might be expected of a man with such grand physique, hardened by long days in the saddle and the open air. And there is not a sportsman in the three kingdoms, I am sure, who will not join me in hoping that for years yet to come, we may be able to say of this noble old King of the Chase, 'The Thane of Cawdor lives, a prosperous gentleman.'



J J Farquharson

'THE OLD SQUIRE OF DORSET'

JAMES JOHN FARQUHARSON.

WHEN Dr Johnson, who had a most unreasonable dislike to Scotland and Scotsmen, was asked by an irate Scot, whether he must not in candour admit that the prospect from Edinburgh Castle was a noble one, he replied in his big bow-wow style, 'Sir, the noblest prospect that a Scotchman ever sees is the high-road that leads him to England.' Along that road, far back in the last century, came the grandsire of James John Farquharson, who for two-and-fifty years was the most popular Master of Hounds in the South of England. But there was only the name and a certain expression of the features to indicate the grandson's Scottish descent. For, the mild airs of Dorsetshire had softened down all the asperities of the North, and there was no kindlier and gentler soul in England than the beloved and honoured Squire of Langton House. 'The Nestor of the Chase' he was justly named, and one felt a kind of awe as one looked at the white-haired octogenarian, whom men still young can remember, and called to mind that he had been the friend of Peter Beckford—a link with the past indeed!

James John Farquharson was the son of a wealthy

East India merchant, who in 1728 bought the Manor of Littleton and the adjoining estate. Born in 1784, James John was educated at Eton, and Christ Church, Oxford. Before he had attained his majority, he purchased a pack of hounds from Mr Windham, of Dunton, Wilts, and from that time till his death never wavered in his devotion to the 'Noble Science,' nor ceased to lavish his wealth on the pursuit of it. His immense fortune enabled him to maintain his hunting establishment in magnificent style. The country he hunted was of great extent, embracing all Dorsetshire and part of Somersetshire—the district, in fact, which is now divided between Lord Portman and the Blackmoor Vale. He kept two packs, one at his beautiful seat, Langton, on the banks of the Stour, as fine a park as there is in England, the other at Eastbury. The stables at Langton contained stalls for thirty-four hunters, and were among the most notable in England. Besides the mounts for himself and the servants, there were always a score of first-class hunters at the service of his friends or of his tenants. At the Eastbury kennels there were seventy-five couples of hounds, and stabling for fifty more horses. One pack consisted entirely of large, the other of small hounds. He himself preferred the former, which he always took with him into the Vale of Blackmoor, because he thought they gave a better account of their foxes. Of the kind of sport he showed, some idea may be formed from the fact that during the twenty-one seasons Jem Treadwell was with him as huntsman they brought to hand no less than 1344 brace of foxes.

There was certainly not a more popular Master of Hounds in England than 'The Old Squire of Dorset.'

And the reason was not far to seek. He was the kindest and most courteous of gentlemen. He was never known to utter a harsh word to his inferiors in station, and his consideration for the feelings of even the humblest labourer in his employ was displayed with as much delicacy and tact as if he had been dealing with the most sensitive lord or lady in the land. Then, again, in the hunting-field he never gave way to those outbursts of coarse and vulgar abuse on which some Masters rather pride themselves, when they have to rebuke a member of the Hunt who has transgressed the rules of the sport. There was none of that fierce 'reading of the Riot Act' heard from James John Farquharson when he was in the field. His equanimity was never visibly ruffled, not even when his favourite hound Wrangler was killed by a kick from a horse whose rider had been repeatedly warned to keep clear of the hounds.

Perhaps, to some fiery spirits, such patience and forbearance seemed to savour of weakness. There should be a limit to human tolerance, they might have urged. But there was no limit to the tolerance and patience of the sweet-tempered 'Old Squire of Dorset,' and his people loved him all the more on that account, aye, and respected him all the more, too, for they knew that none but a strong character could be capable of such self-control.

Then there was his punctuality. It has been well said that there are two points by which you may infallibly gauge the true gentleman—he keeps his appointments to the minute, and he answers his correspondents by return of post. But the two things really come under one head—consideration for the feelings of others—that is the hall-mark of the true gentleman, and it was very legibly stamped upon the character of James John Farquharson.

Thrice the Master of Langton Hall was the recipient of splendid testimonials. In 1827 his grateful brother sportsmen presented him with a superb vase and shield which cost 1150 guineas. In his jubilee year as M.F.H., 1856, he received a still more magnificent testimonial in the shape of a pair of silver candelabra which cost 1800 guineas. And, on his retiring from the Mastership in 1858, his portrait, painted by Sir Francis Grant, was presented to him by Lord Shaftesbury on behalf of hundreds of subscribers.

His resignation was felt to be a great blow to sport in Dorsetshire, and he was most strenuously urged to reconsider his decision. But this he firmly declined to do. He was deeply hurt at the action of Mr Digby of Sherborne Castle and Sir Henry Hoare in taking away their coverts, and he resented the conduct of Lord Portman in unwarrantably trenching, as he thought, upon his country. It grieved every one to see a man of such kindly, generous nature take umbrage at acts which, in the opinion of many, it would have been more dignified and more in harmony with his known character to have overlooked. I was in Sherborne at the time his resignation was announced, and I remember well the sensation it caused. Hunting society there divided itself into two factions—one warmly supporting the action of Mr Digby and Sir Henry Hoare, the other as hotly taking sides with Mr Farquharson. But the partisans of the 'Old Dorset Squire' were both the more numerous and the more influential.

On the 9th of June 1858 the splendid pack at Eastbury was sold by auction and dispersed all over the country, for the Farquharson blood was in high request. 'The Druid,' who was present at the sale, has thus described the memorable scene in his own charming manner :—

'We had still one more visit to pay to Dorsetshire, and on the morning of the sale we left the train, about 2 A.M., at Wimborne Minster.

> "Low on the sand, and loud on the stone,
> The last wheel echoed away,'

as the Blandford mail-bags were hurried off through the mist ; and, after lingering a little near the church porch till the clock struck three, and then making a wild shot in the darkness at one of the three cross roads, we pointed, as we hoped from previous hunting-map studies, for the Eastbury kennels. We felt no remorse for the beds we left behind us, as it would have required more than Spartan self-control at that hour for any Wimborne publican to arise and let us in, and they were never put to the test. A walk on an early summer morning, just as the bridal chuckle of the blackbirds begins to open in every spinney, and the weasels are never done crossing the path, and keeping you in stone practice, is peculiarly exhilarating. However, Nature had no charms after half-past four ; and, having once tried the same thing near Godalming, as a boy, for the sake of cub-hunting with Colonel Wyndham's hounds, we can publicly assure the owner of a hay-field abutting on the fifth milestone out of Blandford that he was the unconscious donor of most charming slumber. The sound of a peal of church bells came floating up the river, and awoke us at last ; and, shaking off sleep and the hay seeds, we strode gaily on our way.

'Blandford did not present any signs of unusual life. One or two Masters of Hounds might be seen "stealing away" from the "Crown" in the direction of Eastbury by eight o'clock, to have a quiet hour on the flags before the country stream set in; but scarcely another soul passed us in the next five miles. The first three were along a dusty road, and it was not a little refreshing to find ourselves on Pimperne Downs at last, and Percy's string of five, with C and O on their sheets, returning quietly from exercise, the leading object in the foreground. Autocrat, in hound and not in horse shape, was in our thoughts that day; and leaving them to wend their way inside the hedge to their stables, which stand by the road side, some half mile nearer Blandford, we struck across the downs to the left. Passing the "Bushes," we soon struck into the deeply-wooded recesses of Eastbury Park, amid a troop of browsing Devons and some young hunting stock which at once told the tale of "the old chestnut blood." Hard by the kennels the whole of the seventeen puppies (eleven of them brother and sister Autocrats) had politely stretched themselves out for immediate inspection on a straw-spread surface beneath an ash tree, and lay there dreaming and curling themselves into many a fantastic group over which Frank Grant or Landseer might have lingered with delight.

'As the lots were looked over, they were passed through into the adjoining paddock; and many a Dorsetshire man gazed with bitter regret on this grand pack as they "packed" for the last time under a large white thorn. Oft had "The Thorn" been trolled at a Dorsetshire fireside in their honour, and now, alas! but six short hours, and no blast from Treadwell could summon his favourites more.

'Five minutes' walk brought us to the house, a fine grey stone structure, with a broad square tower, and a massive ivy-clad gateway. The days of portcullisses and moats had long passed away before Sir John Vanbrugh numbered Eastbury Park House among his triumphs. A natural wall of laurel, laburnum, and lime trees, flanks the stable yard on one side, and joins on with that belt of plantation which encircles the park, and amid which, undisturbed by traps and strychnine, many a gallant fox-cub has been reared in its day. The house itself—near whose back door three or four hogsheads of old and pale ale had begun to know no rest from pilgrims before noon—is only a solitary left wing; and the remainder of it, which passed through three or four families into Mr Farquharson's hands, has long since disappeared. The deserted wine cellar, with its prostrate door, its rustic gratings and its mouldering ceiling, under whose now battered and lead-coloured rose many a stoup of Burgundy or Canary must have been drained dry, alone remains to testify to the hard drinking spirits who of yore sounded the reveillée for the roe-hunt from Grange or Houghton Woods, and killed the yellow-breasted marten for the hem of the robes of their dames or lady-loves in the pleasant purlieus of Cranbourne Chase.

'We care not to go into the details of that day. We have elsewhere told how the Dorsetshire men sat cheering on the wall, and ejaculated "*Hyde for ever!*" as Mr Radcliffe formed the new pack; how they assured Mr Arkwright publicly, when he bought the Banker lot, that "*he wouldn't leave a mouse in covert;*" how they conjured Mr Scratton to "*mind and take care of Rosamond—she's an uncommon good bitch—I know her well;*'

and how that gentleman was seen to obey the mandate by taking her tenderly back to Essex with his own hands. Mr Osbaldeston strolled up in the afternoon to see the horses sold; and old Percy was there, looking over the lots in the stable, and recalling many a recollection, as we sat on the corn-bin together, of the triumphs of the "red and black cap" of Langton. With him to train, and Sawyer, and then Conolly to ride, it was perpetually seen in front at Salisbury, Weymouth, and elsewhere in the "south countrie." Grey Marquis, Presentiment, Garus, and Black-and-all-Black alone won with it eighty times; and the last became such a hero in the Dorsetshire peasants' eyes, that even now they would as soon strike a horse with a twig of hornbeam as believe that their black knight could not have vanquished Eclipse himself. And so the great hunting era of Eastbury passed away on that pleasant June afternoon. The cry of another pack is heard in Coker Wood and Badbury Rings; but still, long after the present century is numbered with the past, a pleasant tradition will linger round Dorsetshire of how a former Squire of Langton took to hounds when a mere college stripling, and how his fifty-second and last season found him with a heart as young and a cheer as shrill as ever.'

But 'the Meynell of the West,' as some of his admirers christened him, though he retired into private life, never lost his interest in fox-hunting, and still retained his position as the honoured 'Nestor of the Chase.' There was another pursuit, too, which he followed with unabated zest to the end, and that was farming. As a practical agriculturist he had few superiors anywhere, and among the admiring farmers far and near he was ever spoken of as 'The Pride of Dorset.' It was not until he had completed his eighty-seventh year that his final summons came. He had been suffering for two or three days from a difficulty in his breathing, but there were no really alarming symptoms, and his general health was good. On the night of March 9th, 1871, after his valet had helped him to bed as usual, he said quietly, 'I shall not be here in a few minutes.' Then, apparently, he fell asleep, and in that sleep passed peacefully away. Before the morning broke the kindly unselfish heart had ceased to beat. The tidings of his death brought mourning into hundreds of households, high and low, and for many a long day to come the memory of the 'Old Squire' of Langton will be cherished by the Dorset folks who honoured and loved him.

THE DUKES OF RUTLAND.

No one who is familiar with the appearance of the amiable and accomplished nobleman who to-day represents the Dukedom of Rutland would ever imagine that his ancestors had been fierce Border chiefs whose deeds of robbery and murder at times provoked the sharp punishment of outlawry. Yet such is the fact. For, the descendants of Henry de Manneriis, Chamberlain to Henry II, becoming possessed of lands in Northumberland in the reigns of the second and third Edwards, imbibed the lawless spirit of the Border clans, and outdid the most notorious of their moss-trooping, cattle-reiving neighbours in the audacity of their marauding forays. But, as time went on, this wild spirit grew tamer, and Sir Robert Manners, the true founder of the line, through which the Dukes of Rutland derive their wealth and position, became under Edward IV a notable pillar of that law and order which his forbears had defied. A staunch Yorkist, he received as the reward of his adherence to the White Rose, the Sheriffdom of Northumberland, and in that office wielded the power and maintained the state of a petty monarch. His marriage, too, added largely to his wealth and influence, for his bride was Eleanor, sister and co-heir of Edmund de Ros, sixteenth Baron of that ilk, a Norman of the Normans, possessed of vast lands in Leicestershire, Rutland, and

Rutland

Lincolnshire. To these estates, George, the son of Sir Robert and Dame Eleanor Manners, succeeded by inheritance through his mother, and among the possessions which then came into the hands of the Manners family was the Barony of Belvoir, with its splendid castle, built as a military stronghold by Robert de Todenai, the Conqueror's standard bearer, which, though thrice practically rebuilt since then, can claim the unique distinction of being the only aristocratic pile in England which has been, without a break, the seat of a noble of the first rank from the days of the Conquest to our own.

As possessor of the Baronies of De Ros, Vaux, Trustbut, and Belvoir, George Manners found himself so powerful and important a personage that nothing short of a semi-royal matrimonial alliance would satisfy his ambition, and he therefore chose as his wife, Anne, sole daughter and heiress of Thomas St Leger, by Anne of York, eldest sister of Edward IV. Their eldest son, Thomas, who by right of his mother could claim kinship with the Tudors, was created Earl of Rutland by Henry VIII on the 18th of June 1525, and thus raised the family of Manners to the peerage.

Thomas was a born courtier and could suit himself to every mood of even so changeable and trying a monarch as Bluff Harry. He conducted Anne Boleyn from Greenwich to her coronation, and three years later took his seat among the judges who sentenced her to death. He was private and confidential Chamberlain to Anne of Cleves on her marriage to the King in the month of January 1540, and quite complaisantly supported her husband in repudiating her six months later. His devoted loyalty had its reward. He was made Chief Justice in Eyre of all places North of the Trent, and, when his Royal Master coolly appropriated the revenues of the Abbeys, my Lord Rutland had a splendid slice of the plunder. Some two-score fat manors, wrested from Mother Church, in Leicestershire, Suffolk, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Shropshire, Yorkshire, fell to the share of Henry's ever-accommodating Chief Justice in Eyre.

It was the first Earl of Rutland who began transforming Belvoir Castle from a fortress into a mansion, a work which was completed by his eldest son. But it was the second son, plain John Manners, who is best remembered, for it was he who was the hero of the most romantic episode in the history of the Manners. Who has not heard of the elopement of Dorothy Vernon, daughter of the fierce and passionate 'King of the Peak?' the brave girl whom neither her father's threats, her mother's tears, nor the bold wooing of the brilliant and handsome soldier Edward Stanley could shake from her loyalty to the plain and homely lover to whom she had plighted her troth. John Manners was no beauty, but there must have been grit in him, else had he never lain for days and nights in the woods, risking a bolt from the keeper's crossbow, for a furtive glimpse at the sweet maiden who had won his heart. And he brought his courage to the sticking point on that dark, wet Saint Thomas's eve, when he rode up to Haddon Hall, and, whilst 'the line of festal light' shone from the windows and the dancers footed it merrily, waited till the cloaked and hooded little figure that had slipped away from the ball-room, came tripping down the steps of the terrace, put her hand in his, as he lifted her into the saddle, and then away they galloped into the dark labyrinth of the forest. In vain the 'King of the Peak,' with fifty horsemen behind him, rode madly in pursuit. The fugitives had got too good a start, and the chase was as fruitless as 'the racing and chasing on Cannobie lea' after the lost bride of Netherby and Young Lochinvar. But when old Sir George's wrath had cooled he missed his pretty Dorothy, and right glad was he when, some twelve months later, she brought her first-born to receive his grandsire's blessing. Then all was forgotten and forgiven, and the son of John Manners and Dorothy his wife became the heir of Haddon Hall.

Belvoir Castle was roughly handled by the Roundheads, who left it almost in ruins, but it was rebuilt after the Restoration, and in the Revolution of 1688 its hospitable gates were opened to the Princess Anne when she fled in terror from Whitehall. She never forgot the kindly protection of John Manners, the ninth Earl, and, when she came to the throne, showed her gratitude by creating him Marquis of Granby and Duke of Rutland.

Under the second Duke commenced the sporting glories of Belvoir. There were hounds kept at the Castle certainly as early as 1730, and probably before that date. But they were no doubt mainly, if not entirely, used for stag-hunting. The kennel records can be traced back to 1750, at which time the Duke's eldest son, the Marquis of Granby, appears to have been Master of the Hunt. A gallant and dashing figure was this same Marquis among his contemporaries. You may see his portrait in the National Gallery, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and a jolly, devil-may-care gentleman he looks there on his mettlesome steed. There was, perhaps, no finer cavalry leader in Europe than John Manners, Marquis of Granby, and the great victory over the French at Minden, on the 1st of August 1759, was largely owing to the skill and courage with which he led the charges of the British and Hanoverian horse. He was, too, as jovial as he was brave—a tremendous toper and an enthusiastic sportsman. Thrift, however, was not his strong point. When he married Frances, eldest daughter of Charles Seymour, sixth Duke of Somerset, one of the most parsimonious persons of his time, Horace Walpole wrote thus to his friend Sir Horace Mann about the happy event: 'The bride is one of the heiresses of old proud Somerset. She has £4000 a year; he is said to have the same in present, but not to touch hers. He is in debt £10,000. She was to give him £10,000, but now Lord Winchilsea (her uncle and guardian) refuses. Upon the strength of her fortune Lord Granby proposed to treat her with presents to the amount of £12,000, but desired her to buy them. The lady, who never saw or knew the value of ten shillings while her father lived, and had not had time to learn it, bespoke away so roundly, that, for one article of plate, she ordered ten silver sauceboats; besides this, she and her sister have squandered £7000 apiece in all sorts of baubles and fripperies, so her £4000 a year is to be set aside for two years to pay her debts. Don't you like this English management? Two of the greatest fortunes mating and setting out with poverty and want!'

Those debts of the gallant Marquis had mounted up to £37,000, unsecured, when gout carried him off at the age of forty-nine. But if his life were a short one it was certainly a merry one. He was the most popular man in England. His jolly face looked down upon sympathetic convivialists from hundreds of sign-boards. It was of 'The Markis o' Granby' that the immortal

Tony Weller was boniface, and to this day you may still come across country inns which commemorate this jovial warrior as their patron saint.

Not much is known of the Marquis's career as a Master of Hounds, beyond the fact that he occupied Croxton Park as a hunting-box and had his kennels there. In Lord Yarborough's Kennel Book there is an entry dated 1756, noticing the introduction of the Marquis of Granby's Dexter as a sire, from which one may gather that the Belvoir blood had even then attained some notoriety.

The son of the soldier Marquis in due course succeeded his grandfather, who died in 1779 at the age of eighty-three, and who to the last day of his life was an enthusiastic lover of the Chase. The fourth Duke had been an early friend of William Pitt, and was induced by that minister to accept the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland. 'Young, of noble aspect and of princely fortune,' says Lord Stanhope in his *Life of Pitt*, 'he was generous, frank and amiable, as became the son of the gallant Granby. Fond of pleasure, he held a Court of much magnificence, and the succession of various entertainments which he gave, splendid as they were in themselves, derived a greater lustre from his Duchess, a daughter of the house of Beaufort, and one of the most beautiful women of her day. But, besides and beyond his outward accomplishments, the confidential letters of the Duke to Pitt show him to have possessed both ability and application in business.'

His Grace's habits, however, were somewhat eccentric. He would eat seven or eight turkey's eggs for breakfast, then ride forty or fifty miles, dine at seven, drink hard till the small hours of the morning, and after a heavy supper turn into bed. No constitution could long stand such a strain, and it is not surprising that the Duke should have died at the early age of thirty-four.

During the minority of the fifth Duke, who was but a child at the time of his father's death, the Belvoir Hounds were managed by a committee, who appointed Lord George Cavendish as Master, and he was succeeded by Sir Carnaby Haggerston, who, in his turn, yielded the horn to that fine old sportsman, Mr Perceval, brother of Spencer Perceval, the Prime Minister murdered by Bellingham in the lobby of the House of Commons. In the year 1799 the Duke took over the hounds himself, and the first huntsman of whom there is any record was Woods, a Hampshire man, who had hunted the New Forest with Major Gilbert.

Newman was Woods' successor, and carried the horn for eleven years. Then came 'Gentleman Shaw' from Sir Thomas Mostyn, who gained his sobriquet from his courtesy and urbanity, and left behind him the reputation of a fine horseman and a good huntsman. He was succeeded in 1816 by the well-known Goosey, who had already been whip to the Belvoir since 1796, and whose connection with the pack did not terminate till 1842, his service thus covering a period of eight-and-forty years. He was a fine, powerful horseman and a capital huntsman.

The fifth Duke is described as being 'of a tall and noble presence, exceedingly elegant and dignified in manner, but singularly courteous in his reception of those who had business with him.' He was, indeed, the very type and model of an English gentleman and sportsman, and no landlord in the three kingdoms was more beloved by his tenantry than he. But fond as he was of hunting, he was scarcely less fond of the Turf. He raced in a style worthy of his fortunes, and when he won the Derby with Cadland, after a dead heat with the Colonel, even those who were losers by his victory did not grudge so genuine a sportsman his good luck. In 1830 the Duke announced that he should have to reduce the number of hunting days per week, unless some younger man undertook the duties of Master. That younger man, as I have already told, was found in the person of Lord Forester, who for twenty-eight seasons hunted the Belvoir country in brilliant style. His right-hand was Will Goodall, the greatest of a family of great huntsmen, of whom my old friend and colleague the late J. Nevill Fitt says:

'The late Will Goodall ranked quite in the first class as a huntsman, and probably no man ever earned a higher or better-merited reputation in the vocation. He stood very high in the estimation of Lord Henry Bentinck, certainly *the* best judge of hunting matters of his day. He said of him:—

'"Goodall's chief aim was to get the hearts of his hounds. He considered hounds should be treated like women—that they would not bear to be bullied, to be deceived, or neglected with impunity. For this end he would not meddle with them in their casts until they had done trying for themselves, and felt the want of him. He paid them the compliment of *going to fetch them ;* he never deceived or neglected them ; he was continually cheering and making much of his hounds. If he was compelled to disappoint them by roughly stopping them off a sucking bitch or a dying fox at dark, you would see him, as he had got them stopped, jump off his horse, get into the middle of his pack, and spend ten minutes in making friends with them again. The result was that the hounds were never happy without him, and, when lost, would drive up through any crowd of horsemen to get to him again, and it was very rare for a single hound to be left out." '

Perhaps the greatest run the Belvoir ever had was that famous one in March 1857, when Will Goodall still carried the horn. They ran their fox from Falkinham Gorse, crossed the Forty-Foot River, and killed him at Pinchbeck on the uttermost borders of Lincolnshire, after two hours and twenty minutes without a check. The inhabitants of that district had never seen hounds and scarlet before, and one old woman, terrified out of her senses, and screaming out 'The Rooshians are coming,' drove her pig and cow into her sitting-room, put up the shutters, and awaited her doom in an agony of fear. Goodall's horse was bogged to the shoulders in a swamp of muddy ploughland, and had to be drawn out with ropes, but was so utterly done up when he was extricated that Will had to finish the run on foot. It was no bad record to kill 110 foxes in 112 days, though Will must often have turned pale as he thought of the wanton slaughter of foxes that had taken place in the Belvoir country before his time, when on a single April day they had been known to kill five old foxes and destroy three litters of five cubs apiece! Will Goodall's Diary used to excite the wonder and admiration of 'The Druid,' who embellished his pages with many a yarn therefrom. And it is a delightful picture which that brilliant writer gives of the old huntsman in the summer time watching his bees by the hour and playing cricket with his boys. A terrible fall, that drove the horn, which he always carried in the breast of his coat, deep into his chest, was fatal to poor Will. He lingered for a while, but never recovered. 'My kind Lord Duke,' as he always called his dear master, the sixth Duke, used to come and see him and talk to him, and, when the end was fast approaching, bent down over his faithful old servant and bade him a tender and affectionate farewell. A model huntsman was Will Goodall, and none ever excelled him in that rare combination of firmness and gentleness which is the surest passport to respect.

Unlike his father, the sixth Duke, whose portrait is given herewith, cared nothing for the Turf. His heart was in the Chase. 'A more devoted and fearless fox-hunter,' says a writer in *Baily's Magazine*, 'never crossed Leicestershire. . . . When hounds are racing in the dark, as is often the case with the duke's, and a tremendous crash is heard over the timber, it is agreed *nem. con.* in the field that it must be the Duke!' He met with the most frightful falls, but they never daunted him. Perhaps his worst accident was that which happened to him on the 7th of February 1863. The meet was at Great Gonerby. They drew Casthorpe Hills for their second fox; he broke covert at the bottom, but turned to the left for Gonerby. Hounds were racing over grass fields at a great pace. The Duke, well in front, rode his horse at a high and stiff-cut fence; the horse just failed to clear it and came down with a crash, throwing the Duke heavily and rolling over him. His Grace was promptly conveyed in a fly to the George Hotel, Grantham, and it was feared that his injuries were fatal. But he pulled through, and was seen once more at the covert side before the season ended, when an address was presented to him, signed by 600 good men and true who hunted with the Belvoir, congratulating him on his recovery and expressing their indignation at the gross insult put upon him by an infuriated vulpicide, who had shot a stout fox before his eyes whilst hounds were in full cry.

The late Duke was a sportsman to the backbone, and nothing made him so angry as to see a fox killed unfairly. Frank Gillard used to tell how one day, before he was huntsman, when he was first whip under James Cooper, the most desperate horseman that ever carried the horn, they ran a fox into a drain. Gillard thrust in his arm, pulled out the fox, and finding he was dead, threw him to the hounds. The Duke rode up white with rage. 'I thought,' said Frank, 'that he would have horsewhipped me, he was so angry, until I explained that the fox was dead. He thought I wanted to kill him unfairly.'

The Duke was immensely proud of his hounds, and well he might be, for they were then, and are now, unrivalled for beauty in the three kingdoms. The rich black, white and tan—the latter colour predominating, whence the famous 'Belvoir tan'—make the hounds wonderfully handsome to look at, and that their looks do not belie their quality is proved by the eagerness with which Masters far and wide try for a 'bit of Belvoir blood.' Thrice, and thrice only, in the long history of the Hunt have drafts been sought from other packs, viz., in 1798, when fifteen couples came from Lord Carlisle; in 1810, when ten couples were procured from Mr George Templer of Stover, Devon; and in 1817, when seven couples were purchased from Mr Pelham. 'I think,' says Mr Nevill Fitt, 'that this is what can be said of scarcely any other pack that ever existed. Herein lay the immense superiority to which they attained, being thus enabled to keep up the family likeness, and to know the distinguishing characteristics of each strain of blood in the kennel.'

A Tory of the Tories, one of the stern, unbending old school was the late Duke. In his early career, when M.P. for Stamford, he succeeded Lord George Bentinck as leader of the Protectionists in the House of Commons, and to the end of his days he was a fierce enemy of Free Trade. Right or wrong, he was at any rate consistent, and never swerved from his convictions. But I don't think any one troubled himself much about the Duke's politics. It was as the dispenser of princely hospitality at Belvoir Castle, as the generous and considerate landlord, as the keen and enthusiastic sportsman, that Charles Cecil John Manners, sixth Duke of Rutland, was best known and loved in his lifetime, and will be affectionately remembered in his grave.

The present Duke, for most of his life familiar to the public as Lord John Manners, the *beau-idéal* of a cultured and courteous nobleman, succeeded to the title in 1888; and, though then in his 71st year, undertook the Mastership of the Belvoir Hunt, continuing to discharge those hereditary duties until increasing years compelled him to abdicate and entrust the hounds to the able hands of Sir Gilbert Greenall.

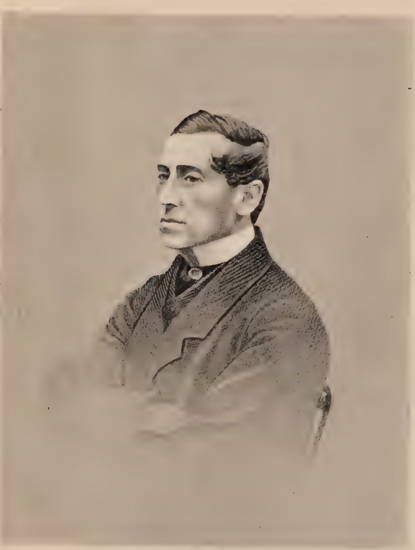
The Dukes of Rutland have ever been a kindly patrician race who have spent their wealth lavishly in providing magnificent sport, not for their own selfish gratification, but for the gratuitous enjoyment of sportsmen less fortunate than themselves.

'THE DRUID.'

HENRY HALL DIXON.

IN my sketch of 'Nimrod' I have animadverted upon the omission of his name and 'The Druid's' from the *Dictionary of National Biography*. But it is some consolation to find that both names receive the honourable mention they deserve in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, a work for which every one who has consulted it must feel the highest admiration. Of all the purely sporting writers of this century, or perhaps of any century, 'The Druid' has, I think, attained the widest and most solid popularity. A handsome edition of his works in five volumes, with a biography of the author by the Hon. Francis Lawley, has been quite recently issued by Messrs Vinton. *Silk and Scarlet*, *Post and Paddock*, *Scott and Sebright*, *Saddle and Sirloin*, still keep their grip on the public, and Lord Rosebery not long since paid this high tribute to the literary merits of these popular books: 'I am one who finds constant refreshment from reading a few pages of this healthy and vivid author, half sportsman and half poet, who has produced a number of volumes which in their way are masterpieces, and will never be surpassed.'

And what manner of man was he whose writings have fascinated two generations of sportsmen? To that question I hope I have given a satisfactory answer in the following sketch.



Henry Dixon

("THE DRUID.")

Henry Hall Dixon was the son of a prosperous cotton manufacturer, and was born at Carlisle on the 16th of May 1822. In many a glowing passage of his writings one can trace his love of the Cumberland fells and dales, and his enthusiastic interest in the sports of the stalwart dalesmen. Take, for example, this passage from *Silk and Scarlet*, on the old Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling matches, a grand old sport now, alas, dying out.

After describing the great cocking mains at the Chester meetings of the old days, he proceeds:

'Strange indeed was the contrast between that crowded pit in St John Street, Chester, and the race accompaniments at "Merrie Carlisle" on a September afternoon. A dark and almost breathless ring of ten thousand is gathering under the hill-side on The Swifts, and George Irving and Weightman—the wrestling champions of the day—are within it. There they stand with their necks crossed, and their hands swaying between them, each watching with the eye of a falcon lest the other should "get hod," and put in his fatal cross-buttock. In vain the umpires threaten to blow them out of the ring, if they keep up the delicious suspense much longer; but all in vain. Weightman kens Geordie's, and Geordie kens Weightman's grip too well, to let him have him by the waist half a second in advance. Then they smile, raise their heads, shake them at the umpires, and try it on once more. No better luck again; till at last the bell rings for Canteen to saddle, and confront his Border friend, Fair Helen, and Bonassus for the Gold Cup. At the sound their hands close round each other with a snap which nothing can unloose this time. Hayton or Bolton Gate must rejoice or wail ere night. Weightman's tall, lank figure towers upwards as he seems to lift the little one almost off his legs, and prepares to fling him into space, but Geordie is busy below. Again and again he stops the dreaded cross-buttock, but the hipe has done its work at last, and the Eden bears to the Solway the long, thunder-fledged shout that "Lang John" holds the belt once more. And so the stalwart Cumbrian crow-alleys settle their differences; and as they hold the plough on their fell sides, or along the rich meadows of the Peterill, the Gelt, and the Caldew, or herd their Cheviots amid the heather wastes of Bewcastle—near scenes hallowed by Dandie Dinmont and St Ronan's Well—they may well think with pride, till another Carel Races comes round, of how

> "Chapman was the man
> Who bore away the prize from all
> At the merry sports of Flan;"

how Jonathan Whitehead can "fling them ony way"; and how Robert Gordon and Jackson of Kinneyside were still the best cocks in a far nobler main than Chester's.'

There you have the sympathy of a true son of Cumbria with her great athletic sport, expressed with an eloquence and spirit which it would be hard to match.

Like 'Nimrod,' 'The Druid' was educated at Rugby, but under what different conditions! The school in 'Nimrod's' days had sunk to its lowest ebb under Dr James. In 'The Druid's' time it had risen to its high watermark under the great Dr Arnold, grandest of schoolmasters.

The teaching and the influence of Arnold took hold of him with a grip which steadied and guided him, even as though the hand of the Master had been upon his shoulder, all through his chequered life of toil.

At Rugby, he did not excel at any game, and the only athletic distinction he gained was as a leaper. Thirty years ago, there was still pointed out on the Barby Road, just beyond the Close, the six-barred gate which he used to clear backwards and forwards—a feat which filled his rivals with envy and despair. 'Dixon's Gate' was once as famous as 'Butler's Leap' over the stream at the foot of the hill on the Clifton Road, which, for nearly half a century, has excited the emulation of every swift and agile athlete in the annual Crick Run, a famous Rugby institution, celebrated by Henry Hall Dixon in spirited rhymes which those of his contemporaries who may still be living will not have forgotten.

From Rugby, Henry Hall Dixon went up to Trinity, Cambridge, where he graduated as B.A. in 1846. A year later he married Miss Caroline Lynes, and commenced his wedded life at Doncaster, where he was articled to a firm of attorneys. But the sporting associations of the famous Yorkshire racing town were too strong for him, and, to crown all, he made the acquaintance of Mr James White of the *Doncaster Gazette*, an enthusiastic writer on sport, who persuaded the only too willing 'Druid' to try his hand at writing for the press.

With such a congenial spirit by his side to lure him in the direction whither his own inclinations tended, it is not surprising that Henry Hall Dixon speedily drifted into journalism. His first contribution appeared in the *Doncaster Gazette*, and from that time till within a few years of his death he was on the permanent staff of that journal. His father was extremely angry at finding that the son whom he hoped to see a prosperous attorney was dabbling in literature, and he showed his vexation and annoyance by telling Henry Hall to 'gang his ain gait' and expect no paternal recognition. With a wife and a growing family to support by his pen, 'The Druid' found that Doncaster did not offer him sufficient work, and he, therefore, boldly set out for London, armed with a letter of introduction from his friend 'Martingale' to Vincent Dowling, the editor of *Bell's Life*, who quickly recognised his talents, and gave him a berth on the paper at a salary of three pounds a week. In the following passage of autobiography, he gives us a glimpse at once of his literary work, and of the proud independence of his character.

'I began my career by editing a Liberal paper in Doncaster for three years, and in 1850 I came up to London and wrote political verses in *Punch* and the *Examiner* for a time. Towards the end of 1852 the late Sir James Graham, who had just been proposed for Carlisle by my father, got hold of an article of mine, which seems to have pleased him. He sent for me to the Admiralty, and, giving me a kindly welcome, took the article out of his desk, and told me he had shown it both to the Duke of Newcastle and Mr Gladstone, that they both agreed with him that it was the only really fair account of the reasons which induced the Peelites to combine with the Whigs to throw out Lord Derby. Sir James told me he was empowered to offer me a post under Government. This I declined, telling him I was young and strong, that I had gone through a bitter disappointment, and wished to go to the Bar and try to retrieve it.'

The spirit which prompted that refusal animated Henry Hall Dixon all through his life. When, at the death of Vincent Dowling, he was offered the editorship of *Bell's Life* at a salary commencing with £1000 a year, he declined the lucrative post because he could not see his way to accepting it without sacrificing that freedom of action which nothing could induce him to forego. Only the sympathetic few who share 'The Druid's' sublime indifference to 'place and pelf' can thoroughly appreciate the true manliness and nobility of his character, or understand the nature of the man who deliberately chose a life of honourable poverty, a life of constant hardship and struggle, rather than sacrifice one iota of that self-respect which he cherished as a greater possession than wealth or fame or position. To 'The Druid's' sensitive nature, the idea of being paid in any form for anything he did outside the scope of his professional duties as a journalist was revolting. He rendered great services to Rarey the horse-tamer—services for which ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have felt no qualm in accepting a handsome honorarium. But when Rarey sought in the usual way to express his gratitude and acknowledge his indebtedness to 'The Druid,' the latter almost resented the offer as an insult, and declined even to allow his wife to accept a present from the grateful horse-tamer.

Similarly, when professionally attending sales, or making inspection of thoroughbreds, or hounds, or shorthorns, he would never accept the lavish hospitality offered to the members of the press and other visitors, but, with Spartan sternness, would turn his back on the 'sumptuous collation,' and have a crust of bread and cheese and a glass of ale at some neighbouring roadside inn. It seemed to him that to accept *anything* at the hands of one of whom it was his duty to write without bias was wrong. He must be absolutely free to write exactly what he thought, whether favourable or unfavourable, or else he would not write at all. And it was this fact which gave his expressed opinions the weight and value which they never failed to carry.

There was, indeed, much of the Spartan about Henry Hall Dixon. He took a grim delight in acts of endurance and self-denial, which even hardy athletes would have felt justified in shirking, unless necessity demanded such a sacrifice of personal comfort. For example, on one occasion he walked from Swindon Junction to Marlborough College, a distance of fourteen miles over the steep rises and falls of the downs *with a large portmanteau on his shoulder*, to pay a visit to the then Headmaster, his old schoolfellow Dr Bradley, now Dean of Westminster! It was a rule with him to incur no expense which could possibly be avoided, even at the cost of considerable personal discomfort, for he was too conscientious a husband and father to spend upon himself what he knew to be needed at home. And, besides, he delighted in the open air. There was something intensely exhilarating to him in swinging along the country roads, or over the crisp grass of the downs, or through the woodland paths with that long elastic stride of his,—a sense of freedom and absolute communion with Nature which none but your genuine *walker* knows. I question whether any one gets so much enjoyment out of Nature as the man who loves walking—the man who can do his steady four miles an hour and yet stop to lean over gates or sit on stiles, like Matthew Arnold's 'Scholar Gipsy,' watching

> 'The springing pastures and the feeding kine.'

'The Druid' preferred 'Shanks's mare' to any other form of locomotion, and in many a glowing passage he has described the delight he derived from tramping over the country, especially in the early morning. His simple, unaffected love of Nature breathes a fragrance of the countryside through all his books, which is, to my thinking, one of their greatest charms.

'The Druid's' father, as I have already mentioned, was so wroth at his son's abandonment of law for literature that there was an estrangement between them. But there was a little surprise awaiting the old gentleman One morning he received by post a copy of 'The Law of the Farm,' by Henry Hall Dixon, which both astonished and delighted him, because it proved that his son had not wholly neglected law for literature, but had brought the two into happy combination in a work which still remains the standard authority on the subject of which it treats. The 'mollified parent' showed his pleasure in very practical fashion by promptly sending a cheque for £100 to his struggling son in Kensington.

Unlike 'Nimrod,' who, as I have already stated, was paid on an extravagant scale for his contributions, 'The Druid' was but poorly remunerated for his literary work, considering the high quality of most of it. He might have said with Dean Swift :—

> 'I've often wished that I had clear
> For life six hundred pounds a year,'

for his income never quite reached that sum, and frequently fell considerably below it. And yet the quantity of work he turned out was much greater and more varied than 'Nimrod's.' His industry was extraordinary, He appeared to be never happy unless he was working; he would write at the theatre, in the train, on a dogcart, regardless of all that was going on around him. On one occasion, whilst scribbling away in a railway carriage, he was shunted into a siding, but he was so engrossed in his writing that he never noticed the fact, till a porter happened to look into the carriage and informed him that the train in which he should have been travelling had sped away without him an hour ago.

He was utterly indifferent to meals, and often could not remember whether he had dined or not. Indeed, his absent-mindedness became so pronounced in his later days as to be a severe trial to the patience of his friends, for he could not sustain a connected conversation for five minutes without falling into one of these fits of abstraction. The following anecdote is but one of many told of his absence of mind. He was once being shown over an old church by the Rector, when the latter noticed a curious trail of black liquid soiling the recently washed and spotless mosaic pavement of the chancel. The vexed and angry incumbent could not make out whence the defiling stream came, and 'The Druid' was equally puzzled, till suddenly a great black blob dropped close to 'The Druid's' feet. 'Why!' exclaimed the Rector, 'it's coming from your pocket!' And so it was. 'The Druid' had unwittingly thrust a bottle of ink, uncorked, into his coat pocket and had been leaving a trail of the dark fluid in his wake. His eccentricities were often a source of anxiety to his family; as, for example, when he entered church in a pair of tattered old carpet slippers with a plaid shawl round his shoulders, or, again, when he was seen crossing the street holding a brass candlestick, with the candle lighted, which he had taken up under the impression that it was his handbag.

But, paradoxical as the statement may sound, 'The Druid's' presence of mind was as conspicuous as his absence of mind. Perhaps he never displayed the former quality in a more remarkable fashion than the following. He had been inspecting a herd in the north of England, and, having wandered away from the herdsman, he entered a building, the sole occupant of which was a surly bull. The savage brute made for him without a moment's delay. 'The Druid,' preserving complete presence of mind, backed against the wall and awaited the bull's rush. Fortunately the beast's horns were wide enough to encircle 'The Druid's' body without wounding him; and there he stood, pinned to the wall, but uninjured, until the bull's keeper arrived and rescued him from his perilous position.

His calm, resolute temper was seldom roused, but, when it was, Henry Hall Dixon was an awkward customer to face. His eldest son, Henry Sydenham, who inherits his father's sporting tastes, tells the following story.

'Only on one occasion can I remember to have seen my father fairly lose his temper, sadly as our false quantities tried him when he assisted us in preparing our lessons for the following day. He had taken my mother and three or four of us children to a firework night at the Crystal Palace. There was the usual crush on the way to the railway station when the time came to return home, and at one point this was made worse by the foolish action of a little man who placed one of his arms across a narrow doorway. Seeing that my mother, who was just in front of him, was in danger of getting hurt, my father reached over her shoulder and quietly moved the man's arm in order to let her pass. The obstructionist took no notice at the moment, but just as my father had begun to descend the long flight of steps to the platform, a violent kick from behind nearly precipitated him and the youngest child, who was in his arms, from the top to the bottom. However, he managed to keep his balance and reach level ground in safety, and then I have a very vivid remembrance of his giving a pretty exhibition of Association football from one end of the platform to the other, his cowardly assailant enacting the part of the ball with great success. The scene is as fresh in my memory as if it happened yesterday, instead of nearly forty years ago. I seem still to hear the delighted crow of the baby who was in my father's arms, and who evidently considered that some new and beautiful game was being played for his special benefit. "The Druid" was himself again almost immediately, and our train started as he was leaning out of the carriage window, and blandly assuring the wife of his victim that "a little brown paper and vinegar, my dear madam, will make your husband as good as new again."'

Though his constitution was tough and wiry, and his tall spare frame capable of prolonged exertion, 'The Druid' suffered much from ill-health. For the greater part of his life he was more or less troubled with ophthalmia, a terrible affliction to a literary man, and for the four years preceding his death he was a martyr to asthma in its most painful form. This ailment he contracted during a remarkable journey from the Orkneys to London, which he performed on horseback in the winter of 1864-5, reaching home, as he himself put it, 'in the snow of a February night, with fourpence in his pocket, on the back of a Highland garron which he bought for £7, 10s. at Pomone in the Orkneys.' The hardships and exposure which he underwent during that long and trying journey, the results of which are told in his 'Field and Fern,' proved fatal to him, for they sowed the seeds of the pulmonary disease of which, after a lingering and often agonising illness, borne with heroic fortitude, he died in the spring of 1870.

He had not completed his forty-eighth year when the end came, but into that comparatively short space he had crammed more hard work than most men have accomplished at three-score and ten. With him it was not fame but duty that was

> 'The spur that his clear spirit did raise
> To scorn delights and live laborious days.'

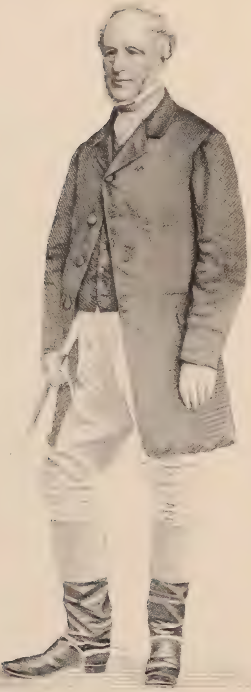
Much of his work, of course, was ephemeral, and, like that of even the best journalists, is utterly forgotten, gone like 'the snows of yester year.' But those who know him only by his four famous sporting books can have no idea of his versatility. He wrote on an infinite variety of subjects, and wrote well on all, but, without doubt, sport was the subject nearest his heart, and the one which drew out all the enthusiasm and emotion that was in him. And yet he was not an expert in any of the sports which he so admirably chronicled. He never, I believe, rode to hounds in his life, nor did he ever handle either cricket bat or billiard cue, but his theoretical knowledge of hunting, cricket, and billiards was profound, and enabled him to write upon them with a spirit and accuracy which made his opinions valued and respected by the most perfect practical exponents of the sports of which he wrote. The Honourable Francis Lawley, in his sympathetic biography of his friend, says:—

'Perhaps the greatest talent possessed by "The Druid" was his capacity for getting humble and unlettered men to put confidence in him, and unbosom themselves of their choicest secrets for his benefit. Never was this more exemplified than in the case of what he calls "Dick Christian's Lectures." He tells us that it was on a cold frosty evening early in January 1855 that he first met "that great Professor of rough riding," from whom he sought to learn how horses were tamed and fields were won. Dick Christian was seated by a comfortable fireside in Chapel Street, Melton, when "The Druid" pulled forth his trusty steel pen to report the old man's "Lectures." "I had never seen him before," he adds, "and came to the conclusion that seventy-eight winters had dealt gently with the veteran. There he sat, the same light-legged, sturdy, five-foot-six man, with nearly all the muscular breadth of chest and vigour of arm left, which had enabled him in his heyday to lift a horse's fore-quarters as high as, if not higher, over a fence than any other man that ever rode to hounds. He seemed to be anxious to jump off at score upon his great Marigold feat, the account of which had just been cut out of an old newspaper and sent to him by a friend; but I called him back, and asked him what sort of a boy he was, and got him well away on that theme at last."'

I cordially agree with Mr Lawley on that point, and rank 'Dick Christian's Lectures' among the best things 'The Druid' ever wrote. I am in agreement with Mr

Lawley, too, when he says "The Druid" understood so well all the surroundings and accessories of the scenes and characters he described as to forget that his readers were seldom as well informed as himself. Thus, he speaks of "Sir Wolly" as dashing the knob of his walking-stick through a pier-glass at Doncaster, after the victory of some horse in which he took great pride, without remembering that few readers of a subsequent generation would know that "Sir Wolly" was Sir David Baird's nickname.' But, though the general charge of obscurity in allusion is well founded, Mr Lawley is singularly unhappy in the illustration he gives. 'Sir Wollie,' or 'Wullie,' was *not* Sir David Baird, but Sir William Maxwell of Monreith, the eccentric baronet who was Lord Glasgow's sporting mentor, and who, though one-armed, was one of the best shots and horsemen of his day. 'The victory of *some horse* in which he took great pride' was the triumph of *his own colt*, Filho da Puta in the St Leger of 1815: and, seeing that 'The Druid' alludes to him as 'one-armed' and speaks of 'his proud St Leger Eve' in the very passage in question, it is surprising that a writer like Mr Lawley, usually so accurate and well informed, should have made such a curious blunder. One can only say with Horace, 'Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.' But it is rather hard upon 'The Druid' that a passage in which the allusion is *not* obscure should be quoted as an instance of obscurity.

It has been objected to 'The Druid's' books that they are too discursive and disconnected, too full of vague allusion to men and things forgotten, to have any permanent value or interest. But, granting that the want of method and sequence is a grave defect, there is still a charm about the style which will render 'Silk and Scarlet,' 'Post and Paddock,' 'Scott and Sebright,' 'Saddle and Sirloin,' a delight to all sportsmen with any literary tastes for many a long day to come. They have already taken their place as classics in sporting literature, and though classics as a rule are more admired than read, and more talked about than handled, yet I think there is such vigorous, racy life in 'The Druid's' pages as will always secure for them appreciative readers in those who love the lore of the Turf and the Chase. Indeed, if future editions of 'The Druid's' works be furnished with explanatory footnotes, to make the obscure allusions intelligible, I see no reason why they should not be read and enjoyed as much by the great-grandchildren as they were by the fathers of the present generation: for, there are certainly no more vivid pictures of the old-time heroes of the race-course and the hunting-field to be found in English literature than those which 'The Druid' has painted with a master-hand in the four volumes to which every subsequent writer on sport has been so largely indebted.



J. Russell

THE REV. JOHN RUSSELL

If all sporting parsons had been of the same sort as the beloved and respected 'Jack' Russell of Devon, I doubt whether there would ever have been any objection taken to them, even by the most strait-laced. The indulgence in sport pure and simple has never, so far as I am aware, been forbidden by the canons of the Anglican Church, though I can recall some instances in which bishops have lifted up their voices against clerical sportsmen as a discredit to the 'cloth.' When Apology won the St Leger in 1876, there was a great outcry raised against her owner and breeder, the Rev. Henry Launde, on the ground that it was a grave public scandal that a clergyman of the Church of England should mix himself up with so worldly and disreputable a pursuit as horse-racing. Mr Launde's reply was that he had nothing to do with the Turf beyond the fact that he was a breeder of thoroughbreds, which he maintained to be a perfectly innocent and unquestionably useful occupation. But there was a sharp passage of arms between him and his diocesan, the Bishop of Lincoln, in which, I think, the bishop had the best of it. Even laymen who were far from Puritanical thought that a parson in his pursuit of sport should draw the line at the racecourse. And a clergyman who openly managed a racing stable, as the Rev. Lord Henry Fitzroy did for his brother the Duke of Grafton, would not be tolerated nowadays. Indeed, there are few bishops now who countenance hunting as a pastime becoming to a clerk in holy orders. Nor would the impudent excuse once offered by a hunting curate to his remonstrant bishop be accepted by any Right-Reverend Father. The curate in question, when expostulated with by his bishop on riding to hounds, said, 'But have I not seen your lordship at a ball? and surely hunting is not any more sinful than dancing.' 'Yes, sir, you may have seen me in a house in which dancing has been going on, but never in the same room with the dancers.' 'Well, my lord, and I am never in the same field with the hounds.'

Never again may a hard-riding curate hope to obtain a living under the circumstances in which one 'young gentleman in black' gained the richest benefice in the gift of the Duke of Grafton. I myself and others have told the anecdote before, but it will bear repeating. On one occasion, when the Duke was out hunting, he was thrown from his horse and fell into a ditch. At the same moment a hard-riding young curate was taking the fence, and, roaring out, 'Lie still, your Grace, and I'll clear you!' leapt over the prostrate nobleman, and, without looking back, galloped after the hounds. Some of those who witnessed the incident were disposed to censure the curate severely for his want of feeling. Not so the Duke, who remarked, 'That young man shall have the first good living that falls to my disposal: had he stopped to take care of me he would have been no sportsman.' And his Grace kept his word.

The sporting parson of the old school was no better or worse than most of his brethren of the 'cloth,' for spirituality was then at a low ebb among the clergy.

But he can hardly be said to have set a very edifying example to his flock.

'Jack' Russell, however, was of a different sort—an altogether lovable man, who set his flock an admirable example of the cardinal Christian virtues. I only had the pleasure of meeting him once, and that was at the house of the late Mr Edmund Tattersall, but I retain a lively recollection of his kindliness, courtesy, and manliness. He struck me as being a fine specimen of the English clergyman and gentleman.

The love of sport with 'Jack' Russell was an inherited passion. His father, the Rector of Iddesleigh, in Devon, where Jack was born on the 21st of December 1795, was a keen sportsman, and kept a small pack of hounds, to support the expenses of which he took pupils, who imbibed from their tutor both scholarship and sportsmanship. Jack was sent to school at Plympton, and thence to Blundell's school at Tiverton, a noted seminary, familiar to all readers of 'Lorna Doone,' of which Dr Richards was head-master. When he was but sixteen, this precocious young Nimrod, in company with a chum named Bob Bovey, conceived the daring and brilliant idea of keeping a pack of hounds. They managed to muster a scratch lot of four-and-a-half couple, which they kept at a sporting blacksmith's on the outskirts of Tiverton. Is there any other instance on record, I wonder, of a sixteen-year-old Master of Hounds?

This flagrant breach of school discipline reached the ears of Dr Richards, who promptly expelled Bovey, but Russell saved his bacon by winning an exhibition of £30, tenable for four years at Oxford.

At Oxford, Russell, like most young men of his day, combined the *minimum* of work with the *maximum* of sport. He hunted as often as possible with the Heythrop, the Bicester, and the Old Berkshire, and learnt many a wrinkle, of great value to him afterwards, from Phil Payne and Will Long, Stephen Goodall and Tom Wingfield, on which he set more store than on anything he gleaned from lectures. A fine, strapping, big-limbed young fellow he was, six feet in his stockings, and with his long reach and quick eye he became, under the tuition of Rowlands, a pupil of the celebrated 'Gentleman' Jackson, a very formidable customer with the gloves. Mr Davies, his biographer, gives a most graphic and spirited account of a great glove-match between the three 'pets' of Christ Church and the fighting-trio of Exeter, of whom Russell was one, in which the former were most ignominiously worsted. Jack Russell used to admit that he fairly revelled in a good Town and Gown row, where he could use his fists without the restrictions of the sparring-school.

One event of his academical career Russell never forgot. On a May afternoon, just before the examination for his degree, as he was mooning about the fields near Marston, he fell in with a milkman at whose heels followed a terrier on which Jack Russell at once cast covetous eyes. Here is his own description of the dog: 'White, with just a patch of dark tan over each eye and ear, while a similar dot, not larger than a penny, marked the root of the tail; coat thick, close, and a trifle wiry, legs straight as arrows, size and height those of a full-grown vixen.' This was the famous Trump, progenitress of that renowned race of terriers with which the name of Russell will always be associated by dog-fanciers.

They were real *fox*-terriers—entered early and only at fox. Perhaps the cleverest of Trump's sons was Tip, of whose sagacity his proud owner told this remarkable story.

'Do you see,' he said, 'that dark patch of hanging gorse, hemmed in on the northern side by yonder knoll? Well, I've seen many a good run from that sheltered nook. On one occasion, however, I had found a fox which, in spite of a trimming scent, contrived to beat us by reaching Gray's Holts, and going to ground before we could catch him. Now those earths are fathomless and interminable as the Catacombs. They are called "Gray" from the old Devonshire name signifying a badger, a number of those animals having long occupied the spot. Consequently, such a fortress, once gained, is not easily to be stormed, even by Tip or the stoutest foe.

'We found that fox a second time; and, while the hounds were in close pursuit and driving hard, to my surprise I saw Tip going off at full speed in quite a different direction.

"'He's off to Gray's Holts, sir, I know he is," shouted Jack Yelland, the whip, as he called my attention to the line of country the dog was then taking.

'That proved to be the case. The fox had scarcely been ten minutes on foot, when the dog, either by some power akin to reason, or putting two and two together, came to the conclusion that the real object of the fox was to gain Gray's Holts, although the hounds were by no means pointing in that direction. It was exactly as if the dog had said to himself: "No, no! You're the same fox, I know, that gave us the slip once before, but you are not going to play us that trick again."

'Tip's deduction was absolutely correct; for, the fox, after a turn or two in covert, made directly for Gray's

Holts, hoping, no doubt, to gain that city of refuge once more, and then to whisk his brush in the face of his foes. But in this manœuvre he was fairly out-generalled by the dog's tactics. Tip had taken the short cut—the chord of the arc—and as the hounds raced by at some distance off, there I saw him dancing about on Gray's Holts, throwing his tongue frantically, and doing his utmost by noise and gesture to scare the fox from approaching the earths. Perfect success crowned the manœuvre; the fox, not daring to face the lion in the path, gave the spot a wide berth; while the hounds, carrying a fine head, passed on to the heather, and, after a clinking run, killed him on the open moor.'

In 1819 Jack Russell was ordained deacon, and appointed to his first curacy at George-Nympton, near South Molton, where he made the friendship of the Rev. John Froude of Knowstone, famed throughout Devon for his love of hounds and his contempt for bishops, who could boast that he hunted three days a week and shot the other three, and could walk any man in the county off his legs. When that resolute High Churchman and stern disciplinarian Henry Phillpotts was appointed to the See of Exeter he was determined to call to account these foxhunting parsons in his diocese, whom he regarded as a scandal to the Church. Thrice the bishop cited the Rev. John Froude to appear before him, but that sturdy parson took not the slightest notice of the citations.

The bishop at length was determined to have an interview with Froude, and as his lordship was staying at the time with that pattern of a country gentleman, Tom Carew of Collipriest, he started for Knowstone with that object. By some intuition, however, peculiar to himself, Froude suspected that such an event might occur, and at once set to work to frustrate the bishop's design. He stationed a signalman within hail of his house on the only road leading to it from Tiverton, with orders if he saw a chaise and pair travelling towards the vicarage to hasten and give the alarm. Accordingly, when the bishop did appear, Froude and his household were not only apprised of his approach, but duly prepared for his reception.

'Can I see Mr Froude?' inquired his lordship, in that mild tone which he habitually adopted when he meant to carry his point. 'Be good enough to say the Bishop of Exeter wishes to speak to him.'

'Please to walk in, my lord,' replied the old housekeeper, Jane, who had gone to the door. 'Mr Froude is at home, but is up abed wi' some ailment or other.'

'Nothing serious, I hope,' said the bishop, taking a seat in the state apartment; 'and, if so, I daresay he would not object to see *me* at his bedside.'

Jane paused for a moment, and then, with some hesitation, replied: 'Perhaps not, my lord; leastwise, if you beant afeard o' goin' there. 'Tis a faver of some sort, but I can't mind what the doctor call'th it.'

The bishop cocked his ear, and looked uneasy. 'A fever, did you say? Rheumatic, perhaps, from exposure to wet?'

'No. I've got that myself bad. Something a deal worse, I reckon.'

'Not scarlet fever, I hope?'

The housekeeper shook her head. 'Worse than that, my lord.'

'Typhus?' asked the bishop, unable to hide his look of alarm.

'Iss, that's it; seem'th to me that's what the doctor ca'd it. 'Tis a whisht job, fai.'

The bishop clutched his hat, and, with little ceremony, took his departure, and, although he announced his intention of repeating his visit at a more convenient season, he never again set foot in the parish of Knowstone.

'When the bishop had fairly disappeared,' Russell used to add in telling the story, 'Froude put on his long gaiters and went out hunting for the rest of the day.'

'I told 'ee so, Jack; I know'd he'd come,' he said to Russell, the first time he met him after that event. 'But there, he's never likely to come again; the air of Knowstone is too keen for him, I reckon.'

The time was to come when Russell himself had to appear before the same Right Reverend Father in God, with what result I shall tell presently. Devonshire swarmed with fox-hunting parsons at that time. The Rev. John Boyce of Sherwell, whose feats with the Devon and Somerset Staghounds are remembered to this day, was a typical specimen of the good old sporting parson, and the following story is told of him:—He gave instructions to the clerk to give out at morning service a notice that there would be no service in the afternoon—giving his reasons, for the private ear of the clerk and not, of course, for publication. But this was how the clerk made the announcement: 'This is vor to give notiss, theer be no sarvice to this Church this arternoon, caus' maester is a goin' over the moors a stag-huntin' wi' Sir Thomas (Acland).'

But stranger announcements even than that were sometimes made during divine service. Russell himself used to relate that on a certain Sunday, while at church in Cornwall, he saw a man posted just outside the churchyard gate; six silver spoons were stuck into the band of his hat, and there he stood, shouting at the top of his voice:—'Plaize to tak' notiss. Thaise zix zilver spunes to be wrastled vor next Thursday at Poughill, and all gen'lemen wrastlers will receive fair play.' The man, with the spoons in his hat, then entered the church, went up into the singing gallery, and hung it on a peg, from which it was perfectly visible to the parson and the greater part of his congregation. On another occasion, in the same locality, but not the same church, snow lying on the ground, the clergyman was reading, when a man walked in, and with a loud voice proclaimed: 'I've got 'un,' and immediately withdrew. He had sounded a well-known note; every farmer and labourer who possessed a gun soon followed him, and in a couple of hours brought to the village inn a fine fox murdered in cold blood.

Jack Russell tried at first to beguile the tedium of a curate's life by taking up otter-hunting, but he had a sorry lot of hounds. 'I walked three thousand miles,' he says, 'without finding an otter; and, although I must have passed over scores, I might as well have searched for a moose-deer.' The fact was, that his hounds didn't know the scent of an otter, and when they came upon it, dismissed it from their noses with contempt. Then he bought Racer, a big foxhound, for a guinea. Racer soon taught the rest how to find an otter, and the pack killed thirty-five off the reel.

His next venture was hunting 'bagmen' with a pack of dwarf foxhounds kept by his friend George Templer of Stover. They ran their 'bagman' on the principle adopted in hunting carted deer, with the object of taking, not killing him.

'The system,' says Mr Davies, 'was a novel one, hitherto unpractised in this or any other country; but the sport shown, and the hard riding it gave rise to, owing to the habit of saving the fox alive when the hounds had fairly run up to him, will be remembered so long as Heytor Rock looks down on any survivor of Templer's friends. A score of foxes were kept within two spacious yards expressly for this purpose; and as they were attached, each to its separate coop, by a long chain revolving on a swivel, they were able to take plenty of exercise, and keep themselves in good wind, the gallop of the animals, like that of a horse in a circus, being sometimes accelerated by a light whip handled by a groom. Of the stoutness of one, yclept the "Bold Dragoon," I have heard both Templer and Taylor relate some stirring tales: he had been turned out thirty-six times, had generally led them a long dance, and never failed to enjoy a fresh rabbit for supper on safely returning to his kennel home.'

On the 30th May 1826 Jack Russell was married at Bath to Penelope Incledon Bury, daughter of Admiral Bury of Dennington House, Barnstaple. That Mrs Russell had considerable personal attractions may be gathered from the following ancedote:—

Before Russell finally quitted South Molton, he and Mrs Russell attended divine service at that church, and occupied, of course, a pew together. At that time there lived at Whitechapel Farm, near South Molton, a celebrated character called John Sanger, a hard-riding yeoman, who, although weighing eighteen stone, and mounted on a thirteen-hand Exmoor pony, had more than once beaten over the moor Mr Newton Fellowes, the great squire of Eggesford, whose hunters were remarkably well-bred. Sanger belonged to Bishop's Nympton parish; but, on that Sunday, when Russell and his bride made their appearance at South Molton church, he occupied a seat a little distance off, but exactly fronting their pew.

On coming out of church, he marched up to Mrs Russell, and, with hat in hand, and a profound bow, said :—

'Good-morning to you, ma'am; I have never seen in all my life such a fine woman as you are. But you have spoiled my devotions, for I couldn't take my eyes off you all church time.'

Shortly after his marriage Jack Russell became curate to his father at Iddesleigh, and started a small pack of foxhounds. But he had great difficulties to contend with, for the sport of legitimate fox-hunting was utterly ignored by a majority of the natives; it had long been, and still was, their practice to murder a fox, when and however they could catch him. To such an extent did this practice prevail, that, for the first season or two, owing to the scarcity of foxes, Russell was compelled to hunt both fox and hare with the same hounds; so that when the real wild article was not to be found, the other was always at hand to give his hounds a spin and keep his field in good humour. Russell thus describes his first adventure with a party bent on murdering a fox in his new country :—

'During the winter of the first year I was at Iddesleigh, the snow at the time lying deep on the ground, a native—Bartholomew, *alias* Bat, Anstey—came to me and said:—

'"Hatherley church bell is a-ringing, sir."

'"Ringing for what?" I inquired, with a strong misgiving as to the cause of it.

'"Well, sir, they've a-traced a fox in somewhere; and they've a sot the bell a-going to collect the people to shoot 'un."

'"Come, Bat, speak out like a man," I replied, "and tell me where 'tis?"

'"In Middlecot earths, sir; just over the Okement."

'I was soon on the spot with about ten couple of my little hounds, and found standing around the earths about a hundred fellows—the scum of the country—headed, I am almost ashamed to say, by two gentlemen. I remonstrated with these gentlemen, and told them plainly that if they would leave the earths and preserve foxes for me, I would show them more sport with my little pack in one day than they would see in a whole year by destroying the gallant animal in so un-English a fashion.

'Impressed apparently by what I had said, both gentlemen instantly bade me a good morning, turned on their heels and left the place; while a few shillings distributed among the crowd, by way of compensation for the disappointment I had caused, induced them to disperse.

'After waiting half-an-hour or so near the spot I turned my head towards home, but before I arrived there I met a man open-mouthed, bawling out, "They've a-traced a fox into Brimblecombe; for I hear Dowland bell a-going."

'So off I went to Dowland in post-haste, found out where the fox was lying, turned him out of a furze bush, ran him an hour and forty minutes, and took him up alive before the hounds on the very earth I had so lately quitted; where, unfortunately for him, a couple of scoundrels had remained on the watch, and had consequently headed him short back from that stronghold.'

On another occasion after finding a fox, he says: 'I ran him an hour, and lost him near where he was found. Then, just as I was calling the hounds away to go home, down came a crowd of men, women, and children, the first chiefly from the village inn, to see this fox murdered. Many of them had brought their loaded guns, were full of beer, and "eager for the fray." And when they found that I had disturbed *their fox*, as they were pleased to designate him, their language was anything but choice.

'A strapping young fellow, one of the principal farmers in the parish, came up to me and said, "Who are you, sir, to come here and spoil our sport?"

'"You would have spoiled mine," I replied, "if you could."

'"You have no business here," he said defiantly.

'"As much as you have," I replied; "for the owner has given me leave to hunt over this estate, and I mean doing so whenever I please. So get a horse, come out with me, and I'll show you some fine sport, if you'll give up shooting foxes."

'"We'll shoot them whenever we can," he said angrily.

'At that moment one of the hounds began to howl.

I looked round, saw she was in pain, and asked, in a threatening manner, "Who kicked that hound?"

'No one spoke for half a minute, when a little boy said, pointing to another, "That boy kicked her."

'"Did he?" I exclaimed; "then 'tis lucky for him that he is *a little boy;* because if a *man* had kicked her, I would have horsewhipped him on the spot."

'"You would find that a difficult job if you tried it," said the young farmer.

'I jumped off my horse, threw down my whip, and said, "Who's the man to prevent me?"

'Not a word was spoken. I stood my ground, and, one by one, the crowd retired, the young farmer amongst the number; and from that day I secured, not only for myself but for my successors, the goodwill and co-operation of some of the best fox preservers that the county of Devon, or any other county has ever seen.'

Some few years after his adventure with the fox killers, foxes were so numerous that Russell received the following letter from a farmer on the North Molton side of his country; it ran thus:—

'SIR JOHN RISSELL,

'Yeur honour will plaize to cum up to Ben Twitching wi' the dogs: us be ate out o' they voxes. Missis kipth on a-telling up and zeth, us shan't ha a Geuse to kill cum Chrismus. But I've a zaid I'd gi her a new gown to mak' up for't; zo her han't a vexed zo mich zince. But do ee cum and gi us a bit o' sport, sir.—Yeur honour's humbl Sarvent, 'T. T.'

From 1828 to 1832 Russell showed glorious sport with his little pack over a country which stretched from Torrington in Devon to Bodmin in Cornwall, seventy miles as the crow flies. He would take his hounds into Cornwall for two fortnights' hunting in the season, and so great was his fame that when his meets were announced the whole country-side kept holiday, no farmer who had a horse or a pony failed to be present, labour was almost entirely suspended, and even the women put on their Sunday bonnets and shawls to go and see Parson Russell find a fox.

A memorable day was the 16th of February 1829, when Russell found three foxes together in Deviock Wood, near Bodmin, and killed all three before the sun set on Brownwilly Tors. A brace broke covert at once, going away side by side; while the third stole off without being viewed, and put his head straight for the moor. Breaking on their very brushes, the pack stuck to the former, pelting after them like a storm of hail; when, after a sharp burst, the foxes separated, and so did the hounds: Russell sticking to one division and screaming to his field to stop the other. Stop them, indeed! the moor was before them, the scent breast-high, and the best horse that was ever foaled would fail to head them now in their desperate onward course. Several of the field tried to stop them; but they never came up even to a tail hound. What followed let one who was there describe in his own glowing style:—

'Nine hounds are running for blood, and although Harris and Colonel Gilbert Raleigh, the future hero of many a brilliant campaign in India, are riding like madmen to stop them, their efforts are utterly vain. Had Jove's winged messenger been there, the god himself could not have stopped those nine merciless hounds, as they sped like very demons in pursuit of their prey. In thirty-five minutes the fox, bright as a new guinea when he first broke cover, but now beaten and begrimed with soil, bites the dust, and is torn, as Mr Whyte Melville has it, into

"A hundred tatters of brown."

'But what of Russell? On bringing back the hounds to Helland Wood there they found him, sticking to his fox like the Old Man of the Sea to Sinbad the Sailor; and driving him like wildfire through that great covert, as if it was no bigger than a willow-spinney.

'"A fresh hat in the ring,"' thought Russell, as he greeted the nine hounds thrown in at head. "Now then, Arthur, we shall have him in no time;" and they killed him in an hour and twenty minutes.

'On counting the hounds it was found that three of them were missing; and, anon, came tidings that a third fox had slipped away, and that those hounds had been seen by a turf-cutter near the Jamaica Inn, streaming away towards Brownwilly. Jemmy Reynolds, kennelman to Mr Pomeroy Gilbert, was then despatched after them; and on approaching a tor of that wild moor, he heard the three hounds beneath it, marking among the cavernous rocks that lay at its base. In went his terriers; and Jemmy, soon handling his fox, brought him home that night in great triumph to the Priory kennels. I never knew,' adds the narrator, 'of a pack finding three foxes at once—with scent breast-high—and accounting for all three of them, as Russell's did on that day.'

How popular Russell was and how thoroughly every man, woman and child sympathised with him in his love of sport, may be gathered from the following anecdote, which I give in his own words:—

'In the spring of 1830 I took my little pack down to

Porlock, to enjoy a week's hunting in the open and extensive commons in that locality; and rare sport we had day after day both with fox and hare. I was accompanied by the Rev. J. Pomeroy Gilbert, there to be joined by the Rev. H. Farr Yeatman, two of the best and most accomplished sportsmen I ever met, to whose names let me add that of George Templer of Stover; such a trio they were as the world has rarely seen together in the hunting-field. On our return from the hills one evening, Mrs Smith, our hostess at the Ship Hotel, where we were staying, thus accosted me:—

'"If you plaise, Mr Rissel, that old scamp, Squire Tamlyn as they call 'en, hath a been down here to forbid you from hunting over his property. Now, hearken to me, sir, and us'll tackle 'en as all sich varmint ouft to be tackled. Ask 'en to come here and dine with 'ee to-morrow, and when he'th sot down comfortable afore the fire, give the t'other gentlemen a wink to leave the room, and I'll come in quietly behind 'en, seize both his arms, and then do you wallop 'en over the face and eyes till he sings out for mercy. I'll never let en go, mind, till you've a finished with 'en; and that I'll promise ye."

'At this point I ventured to remonstrate with her, urging, first, that it would be a gross breach of hospitality, and then that a summons for assault would be sure to follow.

'"But," exclaimed the woman, "the magistrates shan't get a word out of me to convict you, sir, if he doth get a summons; and what's more, I'll tell 'en two or three such pretty stories about 'en, as he won't like to hear: and there the matter 'll end."

'The next day, with the view of propitiating Mr

Tamlyn, I wrote him a polite note inviting him to dine with us; but he declined the honour, much to the disgust of Mrs Smith, who consoled herself with these words, "Well, never mind, I'll give it to 'en myself the first time I set eyes on the mean old scamp."

'And I have reason to believe that she absolutely kept her word; for she was a veritable termagant, a tigress in petticoats.'

In 1831 Russell left Iddesleigh to take the curacy of Tordown near Barnstaple, and in the following year he was appointed perpetual curate of Swymbridge, where he passed the next forty-five years of his life. It was here that he first came into collision with his diocesan the great Henry Phillpotts, Bishop of Exeter, who cited him to appear before him and answer certain charges, among them being one to the effect that he had refused to bury a child because it was his hunting-day. These and other preposterous charges Russell easily and conclusively refuted.

Much disappointed, apparently, at the result of the inquiry, and still unwilling to relax his grasp on Russell, the bishop thus addressed him:—

'The fact still remains, I grieve to say, that you, the incumbent of Swymbridge, keep hounds, and that your curate' (who was also present) 'hunts with you. Will you give up your hounds?'

'No, my lord; I decline doing so.'

He then turned to the curate and said, 'Your license, sir, I revoke, and I only regret that the law does not enable me to deal with the *graver* offender in a far more summary manner.'

'I am very happy to find you can't, my lord,' said Russell, 'and still happier to know that I have done nothing in contravention of the law ; and that it protects me. May I ask then, my lord, if you revoke Mr Sleeman's license, who is to take the duty at Landkey next Sunday?'

'Mr Sleeman may do it.'

'And who the following Sunday?' inquired Russell.

'Mr Sleeman again,' responded the bishop, 'if by that time you have not secured another curate.'

'I shall take no steps to do so, my lord; and, moreover, shall be very cautious as to whom I admit into my church,' replied Russell significantly.

It may be added, that immediately on hearing the result of the conference, the parishioners of Landkey sent up their churchwarden with a 'Round Robin' in Sleeman's favour ; and from that day he remained the curate of Landkey, till he married and removed to Whitchurch, a family living near Tavistock, to which he succeeded on the death of his father.

But it is only fair to the bishop to say that he, too, sometimes scored. For example, one of his sporting clergy, meeting him at a friend's house, said in an aggrieved tone, 'I am told, my lord, that you object to my hunting.' 'Dear me, who could have told you so?' replied Dr Phillpotts. 'What I object to is that you should ever do anything else.'

It is pleasant to know that the bishop lived to understand and appreciate the sterling qualities of Jack Russell. He travelled a long way once to hear the famous sporting parson preach for the North Devon Hospital, and was so struck with Russell's sonorous voice, fine enunciation and earnest manner, that afterwards he expressed his admiration to his host and hostess. Imagine the bishop's feelings when a lady present exclaimed, 'Yes, Mr Russell is very good in the wood, but I should like your lordship to see him in the pigskin.'

There is a story told in connection with Parson Russell and his curates which is too good to be omitted here.

The Reverend William Hocker, vicar of Bucknell, who used to tell the story, was standing at a grocer's shop door in Barnstaple on a market day, when Will Chapple, the parish clerk of Swymbridge, entered the shop, and while his business was being attended to, the grocer thus interrogated him :—

'Well, Mr Chapple, and have 'ee got a coorate yet for Swymbridge?'

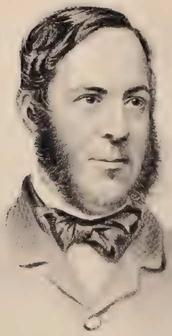
'Not yet, sir, master's 'nation partic'ler; 'tisn't this man nor 'tisn't that as'll suit un; but here's his advertisement' (pulling out a copy of the *North Devon Journal*), 'so I reckon he'll soon get one now.

'"Wanted, a curate for Swymbridge, must be a gentleman of moderate and orthodox views."

'Orthodox! Mr Chapple; what doth he mean by that?' inquired the grocer.

'Well,' said the clerk in some perplexity, knowing the double nature of the curate's work, secular as well as sacred, 'I can't exactly say, but I reckon it is a man as can ride pretty well.'

For a time, indeed, yielding to the entreaties of clerical friends who sided with the bishop, Jack Russell gave up hounds, but life to him without hunting was miserable. Then Mr Henry Fellowes sent six and a half couples, a draft from the Vine. The same friends urged him to send them back. He was about to do so, when his wife, noticing his deep dejection, whispered to him :—



'Then they shan't go, John, if you don't like it. I don't see why you shouldn't have your amusement as well as other people.' Acting on this sensible suggestion, Russell kept the hounds and did not cease hunting them till 1871, when, fox-hunting being well established in North Devon, he parted with the last of his pack.

There are countless stories told of his marvellous endurance. Here is one of his own.

'I left this house (Tordown) on one eventful morning, rode to Iddesleigh, twenty miles, whither I had sent the hounds the night before, found a fox and killed him during one of the most awful storms of thunder, lightning, and rain I ever saw. Scent breast-high from first to last. I then rode to Ash, Mr Mallet's place, dined there, and danced afterwards till one o'clock; went to bed and rose again at three; pulled on my top-boots and rode down to Bodmin, just fifty miles, and met Tom Hext's hounds about five miles from that town. Found a good fox and killed him, dined with my old friend Pomeroy Gilbert, and again did not get to bed—much against my rule—till the little hours. Rested next day—if walking several miles to a country fair can be called resting—then off next morning to Iddesleigh, took out the hounds, found a fox in Dowland and killed him, close to the Schoolmaster Inn in Chawleigh parish, twelve miles as the crow flies. I then turned my horse's head for Tordown, and was sitting down to dinner at my own table, and all the hounds home at six o'clock, the distance being fully twenty miles from the said Schoolmaster Inn to this house.'

And his courage was equal to his endurance.

'I myself,' writes Mr Stanley Lucas to a friend, 'witnessed an act of courage on Russell's part which I can never forget. We had driven our stag, after a long run, to the foot of the Quantock Hills, and there, with five or six couple of hounds only, had brought him to bay in a small stream, just deep enough to compel them to swim, while he stood firm on his legs. What was to be done? for there was no one up but Russell and myself. The situation was a most critical one; as, with lowered beam and defiant air, the deer's charge appeared to be imminent; and then some of the best hounds would either have been killed on the spot, or have had their hides seamed from shoulder to stern. Russell jumped off his pony (Fox by name, a wonderful little animal, which, by-the-bye, immediately ran away and gave me no end of trouble to catch him), rushed in upon the deer, caught him by the horns, and held him till a third man came to his aid; who, so far as I can recollect, was poor old Tom Webber, long since dead. Luckily for Russell, the deer (a four-year old) was not a very savage one; so, while I held the horses, the two, after a sharp tussle, contrived to secure him. Several of the field then made their appearance—a little too late, however, to witness the last act of the play, the crowning scene of the day's sport.'

There is one good story illustrative of Parson Russell's homely way of dealing with his flock which I must not omit. He was called to the bedside of a dying parishioner, and began using, as he always did in such cases, the broad Devonshire Doric.

'"What ails the', old chap?" "Ah! passen, awm afeard awm dyin'." "Well! all o' us 'a got to die, and thou's had a vair look-in!" "That's right, passen! but awm afeard." "What's the' afeard o'? Hasn't murdered anybody, hast the'?" "Naw." "Robbed anybody?" "Naw." "Allus paid the' tithe?" "Iss." "Hasn' meddled wi' any other man's wive?" "Naw." "Then tell the devil to go to hell." And so the poor man died in peace.

Russell retained his wonderful vigour and vitality to the last. Mr Nicholas Snow, Master of the Stars of the West, gives us a glimpse of the veteran, in describing a run he had with the Devon and Somerset in 1881. 'I can well remember seeing him,' he says, 'as he crossed the moors from Culbone with the leading hounds, and shall never forget his ringing cheer as they broke from the river to Badgery and on to Brendon Common. Several people passed the remark, "Look at Russell leading across Badgery!"' They might well make the exclamation, for the grand old sportsman was then within three months of his 86th birthday!

But he had run pretty nearly to the length of his tether. One more season he was seen out with the Devon and Somerset, and it was plain to every one that he was fast breaking up. On the 15th of October 1882 he wrote to a friend: 'I am going to London on Tuesday morning to marry Mr Curzon, the Duchess of Beaufort's nephew, to Miss Basset-Williams of Pilton House, but I'm more fit for bed than a railway carriage.' He was very anxious to attend this function, for the lady's father was his good friend and one of the keenest sportsmen in Devon, afterwards Master of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds, whilst the lady herself was a bold horsewoman, who could boast of riding a lineal descendant of that Katerfelto whom Whyte Melville has immortalised. But it was not to be. He was too ill to leave his bed on the wedding-day. For a time he rallied, and after a stay at East Anstey and Bude for change of air, returned to Black Torrington, the living to which he had been presented by Lord Poltimore in 1880, to die. On the 28th of April 1883 he passed away; the whole hunting world was filled with grief at the news of his death, and among those who mourned him sincerely were the Prince and Princess of Wales, whose guest he had thrice been at Sandringham.

It was only fitting that his last resting-place should be in Swymbridge, the parish in which he had laboured for five-and-forty years, and of which he could proudly say, 'When I was inducted to this incumbency in 1833 there was only one service here every Sunday, morning and evening alternately with Landkey, whereas now, I am thankful to say, we have four services every Sunday in Swymbridge alone, and our dear old parish church has been restored and beautified at a cost of over £3000.' Even Bishop Phillpotts himself must have admitted that the parson who was able to make that boast could not have indulged his sporting tastes to the neglect of his pastoral duties.

So they buried him in Swymbridge Churchyard among the folk who had known and loved him for fifty years. More than a thousand people followed the coffin and gathered reverently around the church. There were costly wreaths in abundance, three of them from Royal donors. But the truest and most touching emblems of sorrow and affection came from 'the poor cottagers who, weeping as they went, brought their aprons and baskets full of wild flowers and showered them into his grave.'

THE WYNNS OF WYNNSTAY.

I MEAN no disparagement to the title borne by His Royal Highness Albert Edward when I say that the real Princes of Wales for some generations back have been the Wynns of Wynnstay. These Welsh magnates might, indeed, if they chose, claim to be of royal descent, for I believe they can trace their pedigree back at least as far as the tenth century to 'Cadrod the Handsome,' a Prince of Anglesea, and Owen Gwynnedd, a sovereign of North Wales. I take this statement on trust, for he would be a bold man who should venture to trace a Welsh pedigree to its source. He would probably soon grow as sick of his task as Charles Lamb did of that 'Brucian enterprise' of his boyhood, when, fired by the adventures of certain explorers of the Nile, he set off heroically resolved to devote a summer's day to tracking the New River to its fountain-head, but collapsed ignominiously somewhere about Tottenham. For, the most patient and plodding of pedigree-hunters might well be excused for 'throwing up,' when across the line of descent there loomed such a portentous facer as the incidental note, 'About this time Adam was born.'

I am willing, therefore, to take it for granted that the Wynns are descended from ancient Cymric Kings.

It is enough for my purpose as a mere Sassenach, to note that there was a certain Sir Richard Wynn, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Charles I, who had accompanied that monarch when, as Prince of Wales, he and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, started off on their romantic journey incognito to have a glimpse at the Infanta of Spain, who had been proposed as a bride to the Prince. It was Sir Richard who built, in 1616, the oldest part of the present mansion at Wynnstay. His son Sir John, who was made a baronet under James I, is described as 'a man of pleasure,' a phrase which in those days had a wide significance. Probably the most innocent of his 'pleasures' was his taste for gardening, which led him to beautify Wynnstay, and thereby merit the gratitude of posterity. The grand old trees, which are one of the many glories of the noble seat of the Wynns, were especially dear to Sir John, and there is still pointed out in the park 'Sir John's oak'—the baronet's favourite tree, to which, when he had grown stone blind, he was led every day that he might run his hands over the giant bole, and assure himself that the great monarch of the woods, which he loved so well, was yet standing hale and sound. Sir John Wynn having no male issue, bequeathed his estate to his connection by marriage, Sir Watkin Williams, M.P. for Denbighshire, who assumed the surname and arms of Wynn.

The Williams family is quite as ancient as the Wynns, but the first member whose career is of any interest to Englishmen was an eminent lawyer, William Williams, Recorder of Chester, and Speaker of the House of Commons in the reign of Charles II, who became Solicitor General under James II, and was first knighted, and then made a baronet in 1688. It was the third baronet of this family who assumed the name of Wynn, and the present baronetcy comes through the Williams and not through the Wynn line.

It is with this Sir Watkin Williams Wynn that the sporting traditions of Wynnstay commence. They are, indeed, somewhat vague, but they have a tragic complexion which invests them with interest. Sir Watkin was a Jacobite, and was mixed up in the affair of 'Forty-five,' though whether he was actually 'out' with Prince Charlie, I have been unable to ascertain. At any rate he felt it expedient to leave Wynnstay till the storm had blown over, and he appears to have enjoyed the protection and hospitality of the Duke of Beaufort. There is, in fact, an old painting at Badminton which represents the Duke and Sir Watkin together, engaged in criticising the points of a thoroughbred colt.

The Welsh baronet, therefore, I conclude, was not regarded as a very dangerous rebel, and, no doubt, soon made his peace with the Hanoverians, for he was back again at Wynnstay and hunting the country, certainly in 1748, and probably before that year. It was in the pursuit of his favourite sport that he met his tragic death, which is remembered as a striking instance of the fulfilment of a remarkable dream. Sir Watkin's second wife, Frances, was a daughter of George Shakerley of Hulme, Cheshire. She was young and beautiful, and the difference in age between herself and her husband may be gathered from the fact that he had stood godfather to her at the font. One night Lady Wynn dreamt that she saw her husband killed out hunting. So vivid was the dream that it filled her with foreboding, and she implored Sir Watkin not to go out hunting the next day. He was impressed by her manner, and promised that he would not go out with the hounds. But, on telling the circumstances to a friend, the latter pooh-poohed the dream as the sickly fancy of a woman, and warned Sir Watkin that if he once gave in to his wife, she would make him gradually give up all his amusements. So he 'defied augury,' and went out with his hounds. He got safely through a long run, but on the return home, in crossing a field at Acton, near Wrexham, the seat of his friend Sir Robert Cunliffe, 'his horse making a peck, pitched him on his head, which came in contact with the only stone in the field.' His neck was broken, and he was brought home dead. This happened on the 26th of September 1749.

The son and grandson of this ill-fated sportsman also kept hounds at Wynnstay from 1768 to 1788, but they appear to have hunted hare only, except when a bag fox was turned down. The oldest established Hunt, however, in that part of the country was the Tarporley Hunt Club, which dates back to 1762, and the rules of which are still extant. Among them are these: 'Any member who keeps hounds shall be invited to bring them to Tarporley for the first week in November; but, if no member of the Club keeps hounds, the Club shall then borrow a pack and they shall be kept at the expense of the Club during the week.' That fox was not their quarry, I gather from the third rule which says, 'The *harriers* shall not wait for any member after eight o'clock in the morning.'

The fact was that foxes were scarce then, everywhere. Even Mr Meynell had to take his hounds out of Leicestershire for the greater part of the 1794 season, to enable the foxes to breed unmolested. 'Bagmen' were in great request, and Mr Roberts of Wem, who preferred fox-hunting to any other form of the Chase, used to get some rare ones, for I read of one that gave them a sixty-mile run on the 30th of November 1792. It was, however, to Sir Richard Puleston that what is now the Wynnstay country was mainly indebted for its sport during the last decade of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth century. He begun hunting in 1786, and kept up his establishment for forty years. The Rev. Sir Theophilus Henry Gresley Puleston, in his interesting 'History of Fox-hunting in the Wynnstay Country,' gives the following remarkable incident which occurred during this period :—

'During the time Sir Richard hunted the Shropshire side of the country, a notable affair in the hunting world occurred. The Woore, belonging to Mr Wickstead of Betley; the Shropshire, under the management of Sir Edward Smythe, Mr E. M. Smythe, and Mr William Lloyd of Aston; and the Cheshire, under Sir Harry Mainwaring, sent seven couples of hounds each to a meet at Shavington, then the seat of Earl Kilmorey, on the 7th April 1829. It was a trial of speed between the three packs. Will Head of the Cheshire, as the senior pack, was appointed huntsman, while Will Staples of the Shropshire and Wells of the Staffordshire were in attendance. It was a brilliant sight, for not less than two thousand horsemen made their appearance, of whom seven hundred were in scarlet; and there were carriages full of ladies without number. At eleven o'clock the hounds were thrown into the great wood at Shavington, found a fox immediately, had a fast ringing run for thirty minutes, and lost him. They had a scurry with another, which they killed in Lord Combermere's Park. Then came the run of the day. Finding a fox in the Sedges by the side of the lake, they went away at a good rate, with the hounds well at him in a body and carrying a good head. Flying the park, they crossed the Chester Road, and got somewhat clear of the crowd of horsemen that pressed upon them. The pace served the hounds, and so, too, did a "regular yawner" that made the leading men swerve from the line to look for a weak place; it was a sunk fence, broad and deep, with stiff rails on the top; the height and the width made it nearly impossible for a horse to clear it in his stride. While they were hesitating at the obstacle, the voice of Jack Mytton was heard saying,—"Out of the way, you fellows, here goes for the honour of Shropshire." Down came his "Hit or Miss" mare with Mytton under her; bleeding, hatless and torn, he remounted his mare and rode bareheaded through the rest of the run. The hounds, with a greatly diminished following, were stopped at the end of an hour, as they were running a vixen heavy in cub. Will Head, having never left the hounds, and as it were first up, was awarded the brush. Will Staples of the Shropshire, however, won two sovereigns from Head on the wager of whose hounds should first taste blood.'

Sir Richard Puleston was a fine sportsman and showed good sport in his day, but the golden age of the Wynnstay country was yet to come. In the year 1841 Mr Hurleston Leche, son of the famous old Squire of Carden, who had been a contemporary of George Forester and Smith Barry, died, and the foxhounds with which he had been hunting the country for several years were sold to Mr Price of Brynprys for 500 guineas on behalf of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, who came of age in that year. There had been hounds at Wynnstay, as I have said, up to 1788. Then, after an interregnum of five years, a pack was started by the then Sir Watkin, who is still remembered for the magnificent festivities which celebrated his coming of age on the 24th of April 1791. Fifteen thousand persons dined that day in Wynnstay Park. The cooks from London filled three coaches; 31 bullocks, 80 sheep, 50 calves, 50 hogs, 70 pigs, 660 fowls, 296 ducklings, 157 turkeys, 166 hams, 18,000 eggs were consumed and washed down by hogsheads of claret and butts of old Wynnstay ale. Such a coming of age had never been known within the memory of man. And when, two years later, this gallant young baronet revived the ancestral hounds, the occasion was celebrated by a dinner and ball on a scarcely less sumptuous scale. These hounds, however, only hunted hare, except on the rare occasions when a bag-fox was turned down, and I think they must have been discontinued before the baronet of 1841 came into his inheritance.

The greatest and princeliest of all the Wynns was *the* Sir Watkin whose name is associated with the most glorious period the Wynnstay country has ever known. Born in 1820, educated at Westminster and Christchurch, Oxford, Sir Watkin, after a brief sojourn at the University, was gazetted to a cornetcy in the Life Guards at the age of nineteen. His military duties prevented him from taking charge of the hounds, which, as I have already stated, were purchased for him by Mr Price in 1841, but he practically financed the pack of which Mr James Atty, who was then renting Penley Hall, became Master. I knew Mr Atty well during his later days at Rugby, where he died some twelve or fifteen years ago, and I retain a vivid recollection of him as one of the best specimens of an English gentleman I have ever met. He was a fine horseman and a good sportsman, and for two seasons he showed excellent sport in the Wynnstay country.

In 1842 Sir Watkin bought the Perthshire Hounds from Mr Grant, elder brother of Sir Francis, afterwards President of the Royal Academy. And in 1843 the Lord of Wynnstay at last assumed his true vocation as the head of fox-hunting in North Wales. He sold out of the Life Guards, shaved off his moustache, 'the badge of slavery,' as he called it, for 'the knightly growth that fringed his lip' was then the prerogative and distinguishing mark of a cavalry officer, and settled down to the duties of a Master of Foxhounds and a great territorial magnate. He had toyed a little with the Turf in his soldiering days, and his splendid team of browns, his cabriolet with the best grey stepper in London, his perfect dun-brown Park hack had marked him already in the world of sport and fashion as a man whose taste in horseflesh was unexceptionable. But his heart was in the Chase, and for the rest of his life it was the sport to which he devoted all his energy and attention. With youth, health, enthusiasm, a boundless purse, and the royal gift of spending money lavishly without vulgar ostentation, it was no wonder that Sir Watkin put life and soul into fox-hunting in North Wales. His stables were full of the best horses to be got for money in England or Ireland, his kennels were carefully recruited from the choicest blood in the three kingdoms. It was a pride and pleasure to hunt with such hounds. Of his own qualities as a horseman let one who knew him well, speak.

'Sir Watkin had a strong seat, a light hand, good nerve, and a quick eye to hounds; he never pulled his horses' mouths about, and therefore, though he *courted* a fall very often, by galloping down all sorts of lanes, and cramming his horses through blind places, he seldom had one, and never, we believe, a serious one. His horses in his early days were always *well-bred*, never less than sixteen hands, with the very best of shoulders, legs, and feet. Sir Watkin seldom or never "flew a fence," but trained his horses to jump the widest ditches, and even the Grafton and Aldersey brooks, at a stand, to creep through a thick blind fence with a big ditch on the other side; then, when he dropped his hand, his horse jumped, and immediately he scuttled away as fast as the horse could gallop; thus he got over the country amazingly, and has puzzled and surprised many a young one, who followed him, to see what places his horses carried him through or over, apparently with the greatest ease. A remarkable instance of this occurred on December 23rd, 1863, when his hounds found at Sandford Pool, near West Felton, a good fox that ran over the bogs, and then took a good line up to Porthwain lime rocks, where he was killed after a fast forty minutes. Colonel Lloyd and another got over the bog somehow and saw the run. Sir Watkin jumped a drain fully four yards wide, and by galloping down a road got up in time to see the fox killed. Usually Sir Watkin rode the same horse all day until the hounds turned their heads towards Wynnstay kennels.'

In 1848 all Sir Richard Puleston's old country came into Sir Watkin's hands—and his sway thus extended over the cream of Shropshire, the finest part of the Chester Vale and both sides of the Dee from Wynnstay to the Duke of Westminster's great show-place, Eaton Hall. New kennels were erected at the Park Eyton entrance to Wynnstay, and, with fifty-three couples of hounds there, and sixty horses in his stables, Sir Watkin felt equal to all the requirements even of the big country he had undertaken to hunt four days a week.

In 1847 Sir Watkin secured a rare acquisition to his establishment in the person of 'Merry John Walker,' who for eighteen seasons had hunted the Fifeshire hounds, with such success that his name was familiar as a household word in the mouths of sportsmen not only north of the Tweed but far south even to the Shires. Lord Suffield, who was then Master of the Cottesmore, offered John 500 guineas a year to come to him, but Sir Watkin was first in the field and had snapped up the famous Scottish huntsman.

John Walker was a model huntsman, unsurpassed in nerve and judgment. His temper, indeed, was none of the sweetest, but he had good sense and tact enough to keep it under control, and his 'Hold hard, gentlemen, I *pray* you do,' seldom failed to bring even the most inveterate thrusters to their bearings. And there was something of pawky Scotch humour in the dry stage whisper in which, when hounds had hit off the line and were away, he would add: 'That will do—*now*, ride over them.'

On the 6th of March 1858 a terrible calamity befell Sir Watkin. His splendid seat at Wynnstay was destroyed by fire. A gale was blowing at the time, and so fast and fiercely did the flames spread that it was found impossible to save the priceless works of art, the cherished family heirlooms, and a vast amount of miscellaneous property of great value. The loss was irreparable, and though Sir Watkin and Lady Wynn put a brave face upon it in public, there can be no doubt that both of them, and especially Sir Watkin, felt the loss very deeply. Having no residence to hunt from, Sir Watkin resolved to go abroad, and all his horses came to the hammer. It was a sad day for Simpson, the baronet's stud groom, who had left the box of the Devonport Mail to take service at Wynnstay, when one after another of the horses on which he had lavished so much care and affection was put up for sale. The average was the highest up to that time ever recorded, the two biggest prices paid being £651 for Cassio and £483, 15s for King Dan.

Colonel Wellington Stapleton Cotton took the Mastership in Sir Watkin's absence and hunted the country till the baronet's return in November 1859. It was during Colonel Cotton's tenure of office that the Bangor Hunt Steeplechases were first inaugurated. They originated in a sporting match, between the Hon. Lloyd Kenyon and Mr Richard Myddelton Biddulph, which was fixed for February 25th, 1859. The promoters of the match thought they might as well make a day of it, and have farmers' and gentlemen's races to fill up the programme. So successful was the meeting that it was resolved *nem. con.* to continue it, and continued it has been ever since. All sports came alike to Colonel Cotton, and he excelled in all. Moreover, he was a keen agriculturist, and especially interested in the breeding of Berkshire pigs, in connection with which Sir Theophilus Puleston tells the following story :—

'We once witnessed an amusing scene at the Birmingham Cattle Show, whither we went with Colonel Cotton and Sir Watkin. Wellington Cotton had persuaded Sir Watkin to let him try and buy for him a Berkshire boar which was exhibited there ; the owner demurred to the price offered, and suggested that Sir Watkin should give more for him, on which the Colonel said he was sure he would not give a farthing more, and that the owner had better take the price offered, or there would be no sale, adding, "Sir Watkin is a *confounded pig-headed Welshman*," the said Sir Watkin standing a few feet away, smothering his laughter by cramming his pocket handkerchief into his mouth.'

Colonel Cotton was universally popular, and his tragic death in 1891 filled many hearts with mourning. On a dark winter's evening, he was returning home from the studio of Mr Herkomer, who was painting his portrait for the Tarporley Hunt Club—when, in crossing the street, a hansom ran into him. In trying to escape he ruptured all the muscles above the knee, and the shock, acting on a weak heart, killed him.

In 1865 John Walker, who had long been a martyr to gout, resigned the horn to Charles Payne. There was more fun among the field in Walker's day than ever before or since. He was both merry himself and the cause of mirth in others. Here is the final glimpse of him which Sir Theophilus Puleston gives:—

'Major Lloyd sends us an account of a run at this time from the Fenns, whence the fox took them past Bettisfield and Gredington, over the Old Hall property, and leaving Burton's Wood on the right, to ground in the Wyches; he adds, the hounds went at great pace all the way, and had far the best of us; it was a real case of galloping. Two incidents connected with this run fix it, he says, indelibly in my mind. The first was an extremely unpleasant one. I was riding a good young thoroughbred, but somewhat sticky. My father was on a high-class hunter. When nearing the Wyches, we came to a small brook with boggy banks, and, knowing my horse wanted a lead, I followed my father, and "woe worth the hour, and woe worth the day," he fell, and I jumped on him! I draw a veil over what followed. My horse was so lame that with difficulty I got him home; my father's scarcely lame at all; in a week mine was quite sound, but his took to running joint-oil and died. The second incident was our meeting old Walker, to whom my father said, "A first-rate run." "I know it," said he; "I was on the road, and heard them running 'great guns' over the Old Hall." I never saw Walker again, and the next I heard of him was his death and burial on the day the hounds had *the* run of the season." The Major adds another run, with a characteristic anecdote of our M.F.H. "When the hounds were running in the Carden country, they crossed the Aldersey brook; up to this point my father had been quite in front on a good horse called Telegram; he would not, however, face water, and my father knew it, so he pulled up, and looking round spied his second horseman; to whom he shouted, "Come on, ride him at it." The man did as he was told, and cleared it easily. "Get off," said my father; he himself jumped off Telegram, crawled on a pole over the brook, and was soon alone with the hounds. "How did Dick get there?" said Sir Watkin; and when he was told, out came the handkerchief, and into his mouth it went. My father never heard the last of it."'

Charles Payne, who succeeded Walker, had made himself a great name with the Pytchley, and he well sustained his reputation with Sir Watkin Wynn. He was a huntsman of the highest class, and, though polite and courteous, had yet a look in his handsome and determined face which kept 'thrusters' in awe.

Mr Arthur Wheildon, himself an ex-M.F.H., gives the following description of a thrilling adventure he had with Charles Payne and his first whip Tom Smith, one of the famous Brocklesby breed :—

'We found at Sutton Green Covert a good fox, which crossed at once the river Dee. I was then a complete stranger to the country, and, finding myself at the end of one of those large meadows, with the river Dee in flood staring me in the face, did not know which way to turn, when Charles Payne beckoned me to follow him, which I did, to the ferry boat. This, however, could scarcely contain Payne, myself, the two whips, and our horses, being full to the gunwale, and rocking to and fro fearfully ; and the recent fate of Sir Charles Slingsby (1869) came vividly before my eye, for we were all but foundering, the old woman at the wheel, dead beaten, having left us to our fate in the middle of the stream, shouting out that she could do no more. Then that good fellow Tom Smith, pluckily jumped into the middle of the flood, scrambled ashore, and pulled us safely over.

'Anyone who has ever seen the river Dee in flood will acknowledge that Tom Smith's jumping in to the rescue of his comrades was as plucky a thing as was ever done ; and if there were a Victoria Cross for daring deeds *not* done on the battlefield, Tom Smith ought to have had it.'

It was in Charles Payne's time that the Empress of Austria, who rented Combermere Abbey during the season of 1880-81, occasionally came out with Sir Watkin's hounds. Her pilot was Colonel Rivers

Bulkeley, and her horses and habits were the envy of all the ladies in the field. The Empress's visit was commemorated in the following verses :—

WITH THE WYNNSTAY.

A welcome to the Kaiserinn, who rides so straight and well,
No other lady in the Hunt from her may bear the bell.
From Austria's old imperial halls she comes to English land,
And not a rider in the field has lighter bridle hand,
So gallantly she races on through all the livelong day ;
And who would shirk the fences when an Empress leads the way ?
The meet was fixed for Cloverly—the hounds were Watkin Wynn's,
An old dog-fox was quickly found, and 'Yoicks'! away he spins,
Past Ightfield on to Hall, he ran for Wilkesley like the wind ;
But there upon the course at Ash the hounds were close behind.
Heads up they ran, before them fled the fleet fox for his life ;
In sooth it was a 'crowded hour' of not inglorious strife.
So fared we with the Wynnstay Hunt, and ever in the van,
Though Middleton and Bulkeley rode as English sportsmen can,
Upon her grand old horse Hard Times, the Empress sailed away ;
The dark blue habit shone for us an oriflamme that day.
She topped the fence, she flew the brook—now sound the fox's knell,
And doff the cap, and hand the brush the Empress wins so well.

Sir Watkin himself, though his ill health had for some time previously kept him from hunting, was there to do the honours to his Imperial guest. But he was no longer the Sir Watkin of yore. Already his figure had begun to shrink, and the exertion of being in the saddle at all was evidently painful to him. His appearances in the hunting-field after this were but fitful and few, and for the last six or seven years of his life he was so seldom out with his own hounds that he had but little personal amusement to repay him for all his magnificent expenditure.

In 1883 Charles Payne retired on a handsome pension. So highly were his qualifications as a huntsman recognised that on his retirement he was publicly presented with the sum of £1379, 4s in a silver cup, with the following address on vellum :—

'Presented to Charles Payne on Thursday, 26th July 1883, the sum of 1379 pounds, 4 shillings, including the cost of a silver hunting horn and this address, by members of the Wynnstay Hunt and other friends, as an expression of their high appreciation of his uniform civility and constant endeavour to show sport during the eighteen years he hunted Sir Watkin Wynn's hounds.'

He died in February 1894. Frank Goodall came from the Meath to succeed Charles Payne, but I don't think that Frank's warmest friends would contend that he was a success at Wynnstay. No doubt the Whitchurch Saturdays, which drew crowds of the best men that Shropshire, Cheshire, and the Welsh Marches could produce, tried Goodall's temper, and comparisons between his manner and the winning ways of Charles Payne were not to the advantage of the newcomer. But then there was no Sir Watkin with Frank to smooth matters for him, and the absence of the Master could not fail to be severely felt by a new huntsman thus suddenly thrown among strangers. Meanwhile Sir Watkin's health grew worse and worse. And the terrible shock dealt to his shattered nerves on the evening of May 30th, 1884, unquestionably hastened his end. He was sitting in his drawing-room in St James's Square about 10 P.M., when a frightful explosion shook the house to its very foundations. The crash of breaking glass, the fall of dislocated masonry, the screams of terrified servants, all combined to create a scene of horror never to be forgotten. Almost simultaneously there was another tremendous explosion at the Junior Carlton Club close by. Two dynamite bombs were the cause of the disasters;

that which had partially wrecked Sir Watkin's house had no doubt been placed there by mistake, and was intended for Adair House, two doors further off, where the offices of the Intelligence Department of the War Office then were.

Yet, with the stamp of death on his face, plain for all men to see, Sir Watkin lived till the following spring. It was on the 9th of May 1885 that he passed away, and on the 18th they buried him, in the presence of a vast concourse of mourners, in the pretty churchyard of Llangedwyn, by the side of his beloved little daughter Nesta, whose early death had wrung his heart with sorrow.

His character as a sportsman cannot be better summed up than in these admirable words of one who was well qualified to judge :—

'What a type of unassuming nobility he had been! What hearty good nature and sterling common-sense had ever been harboured in that broad chest and cheery countenance! What a void has his death created wherever Dee and Severn roll their swiftest waters!

'A Master of Hounds without a subscription almost from his coming of age, a Member of Parliament for hardly less a period, the owner of many square miles not easily reckoned, a Deputy Lieutenant of four counties, a Provincial Grand Master of Freemasons, an Aide-de-camp to the Queen, a Member of the Jockey Club, and a Great Western Director, a veritable Prince among Welshmen, and beloved by all.

'Just a few words of Sir Watkin Wynn as a Master of Foxhounds. Though never a flyer, he had an extraordinary knack of getting over the country. He would creep through blind places, drop his horse into a road, jump the Aldersey Brook at a stand; never lose the line of his hounds. In his hey-day he always rode big horses, but latterly he had ridden strong cobby horses and tested their understandings down all sort of roads, that younger and lighter men would have shuddered at, with a loose rein at full gallop.'

Sir Watkin had a considerable fund of humour and could tell a story well. Here is one which he was rather fond of telling:—

'When travelling on a certain occasion by the Cambrian Railway, a gentleman fell into conversation with Sir Watkin, and finding that he knew thoroughly all the country through which they passed, repeatedly asked, 'Whose property is this?' and on each occasion received the same answer, 'Mine.' When they reached the terminus where the gentleman was leaving the railway, he thought it would only be fair to the Company to give the guard a friendly hint, so he advised him to keep an eye on his fellow-traveller, saying:—"He is *evidently a lunatic*, for he has claimed as his own all the farms by the side of the railway line *for miles*."'

There have been two successors to the great Sir Watkin in the title. Both of them have well upheld the fame of the Wynns of Wynnstay for sport and hospitality, but though it may be safely prophesied that the old name will never want worthy representatives, yet those who knew *the* Sir Watkin may be pardoned for doubting whether the race will ever produce his equal, one in whom, I may say without exaggeration, there was—

> 'A combination and a form, indeed,
> Where every god did seem to set his seal
> To give the world assurance of a man.'

THE EARLS SPENCER.

THERE was what modern journalists would call a 'scene' in the House of Lords on the 18th of November 1621. John, first Baron Spencer, had made an earnest appeal to his fellow peers to be guided in their conduct by the actions of their ancestors. Whereupon, the proud Earl of Arundel, head of the great house of Howard, rose to his feet, and hurled this taunt at the orator; 'My Lord, when these things were doing, your ancestors were keeping sheep.' To which Lord Spencer retorted, 'My Lord, when my ancestors, as you say, were keeping sheep, yours were plotting treason.' Whereat, the high-spirited Howard laid his hand on his sword and gave his opponent the lie direct. The House took the part of Lord Spencer, who stood high in the favour of King Jamie. Arundel was sent to the Tower, and was not released until he had apologised, as humbly as could be expected from a Howard, to Lord Spencer and the House.

It will be noted that Lord Spencer did not deny that his ancestors had kept sheep. And, indeed, he had no reason to be ashamed of so ancient, useful, and lucrative a calling. Was not the 'good Lord Clifford,' to whom I have referred elsewhere, for half his life a shepherd? and yet he showed that he could 'head the Flock of War' at Flodden. And when the ill-starred Prince

Arthur was a prisoner in the hands of his cruel uncle, what was his idea of perfect bliss?

> 'By my christendom
> So I were out of prison and *kept sheep*,
> I should be as merry as the day is long.'

But honest John Spencer, the founder of the Spencer family, was something more than a shepherd, he was a 'breeder of fat beeves and oxen;' a prosperous Warwickshire grazier, in fact, with a sound judgment in buying land. He was a worthy citizen, one of those steady, sober men of substance whom the then reigning monarch, Henry the Seventh, the most business-like and thrifty of the Tudors, liked to have about him. Consequently John Spencer was knighted, and among his other extensive land-purchases, bought Althorp in Northamptonshire, the present lordly seat of the Spencers, which he converted into a huge grazing farm.

His great-grandson, the hero of the scene in the House of Lords, was knighted by Elizabeth, and created a Baron by James the First. Camden says: 'He was a worthy encourager of virtue and learning;' and that he also possessed the agricultural tastes of his sire and grandsire, I gather from the following passage in Wilson's Life of King James the First. 'Spencer,' he says ('like the old Roman chosen Dictator from his farm), made the country a virtuous court, where his fields and flocks brought him more calm and happy contentment than the various and unstable dispensations of a court can contribute, and, when he was called to the Senate, was more vigilant to keep the people's liberties from being a prey to the encroaching power of monarchy than his harmless and tender lambs from foxes and ravenous creatures.' It would hardly be safe to infer from that reference to fox-killing that the first Lord Spencer was a fox-hunter. Indeed foxes, as I have already shown, were in those days not hunted but incontinently slain as pestilent vermin. It was this John Spencer who flung in Lord Arundel's teeth the retort I have given above, and thereby showed that he was not ashamed of the fact that his grandsire had been a Warwickshire grazier.

Henry, the third Baron Spencer, gave the family an upward step in the peerage, for he was created Earl of Sunderland by Charles the First. But he did not live long to enjoy his earldom. His patent bears date 8th June 1643, and a little more than three months later, on the 20th of September, he was shot through the heart whilst gallantly leading a charge of Cavaliers against the Roundheads at Newbury. But he is, perhaps, best remembered as the successful rival in love of Edmund Waller, smoothest of versifiers and most versatile of trimmers, who could eulogise with equal fluency the Lord Protector Cromwell and his restored Majesty King Charles the Second. Waller, who was rich and well-born, aspired to the hand of Dorothy Sidney, eldest daughter of the Earl of Leicester, and sister of Algernon, the republican patriot, whose noble life ended on the scaffold. The poet poured out tender verses to his 'Saccharissa,' but she was deaf to the voice of the Muses, and had the bad taste (from Waller's point of view) to prefer his prosaic rival Henry Spencer.

An only son was the issue of the union of the cavalier Earl and the beautiful 'Saccharissa'—Robert, whose sole vice was an inveterate love of gambling, a vice, however, which, as in the case of Charles James Fox, did not prevent him from attaining political distinction. He was Lord President of the Council under James the Second, and stood high in the favour of that monarch, but found it expedient to give in his allegiance to William of Orange, and was able to reconcile with his principles the acceptance of office as Lord Chamberlain under the new *régime.* The King paid him a visit at Althorp, when, as Macaulay puts it, 'All Northamptonshire crowded to kiss the Royal hand in that fine gallery which had been embellished by the pencil of Vandyke and made classical by the muse of Waller.' And the Earl tried to conciliate his Tory neighbours, who regarded him as an 'evil Ahitophel,' by feasting them at eight tables, all blazing with plate.

Charles, son of Robert, and third Earl of Sunderland, was the greatest man the Spencers have so far produced. As Secretary of State under Anne and Lord Privy Seal and First Lord of the Treasury under George the First, he left his mark on English politics. And yet, though he condescended to hold office under a monarchy, he professed to be a republican. Titles he affected to despise. 'Don't call me "my lord,"' he would say irritably, to those who thus addressed him. 'I don't call myself a lord. I'm plain Charles Spencer.' But, though he was a conspicuous figure in the political world, he always, like all the Spencers, hankered after a private life. Books were his hobby, and it was his ambition to possess the most magnificent library in England—an ambition which he did not live to realise; but he laid the foundation of that priceless collection which is now one of the chief glories of Manchester.

It was through Charles, third Earl of Sunderland, who married Lady Anna Churchill, daughter of the Victor of Blenheim, that the dukedom of Marlborough came into the

Spencer family, for, in default of direct male heirs of the great duke, his grandson Charles Spencer, eldest son of the said third Earl of Sunderland, succeeded to the ducal title in 1733. From John, the youngest brother of Charles, the present Earl Spencer derives his descent. This John Spencer was the favourite grandson of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, and she left him the bulk of her large personal property. His son John was the first Earl Spencer and the founder of the Pytchley Hunt and Club. It was about the year 1760 that Lord Spencer removed his hounds from Althorp to kennels in the little village of Pytchley, and established at the Old Hall there the Pytchley Club. On his death in 1783 he was succeeded by his nephew John George, who for thirteen years was Master of the Pytchley, with the celebrated Dick Knight as his huntsman. Dick's name still lives in the traditions of the Chase as one of the greatest huntsmen of all time, and the following particulars of his career, for which I am indebted to Mr Nethercote's admirable 'History of the Pytchley Hunt,' will not, I am sure, be considered out of place.

'Born at Courteen-hall, of parents in whose eyes there was "nothing like leather," he was brought up to make, rather than to wear, a top-boot ; but a natural love for all things pertaining to sport soon got him among hounds and horsemen ; and, advancing step by step, he succeeded in attaining the pinnacle of his ambition by becoming huntsman to the famous Pytchley Hounds. In the well-known picture by Mr Loraine Smith, of Enderby Hall, Knight is portrayed as finishing the run on a cart-horse taken from a plough, his own animal being completely knocked up. In a second picture, by the same skilful hand, he is depicted jumping a fence beneath the overhanging bough of a tree, with head bowed downwards, and both legs over his horse's neck. The reason for his appearing in this somewhat unusual attitude, was, that one day at the meet a stranger said to him, "Knight, I've heard a good deal of your riding, but if you beat me to-day I will give you the horse I am on." "All right, sir," said Knight, "we shall see."

'During the run they came to a fence the only jumpable place in which was under a tree, the branches of which overhung, and scarcely left space sufficient for a man and horse to get through. Bending his head, and throwing his legs over his animal's neck, Dick went through the opening like a clown through a drum. This was too much for the stranger, who preferred losing his horse to breaking his neck by following, and honourably carried out what he had undertaken to do, by sending his steed to the more plucky horseman on the following day. Knight was famous for possessing a voice so powerful that a well-known sportsman used to declare that from his house at Wellingborough he could, on a clear, frosty morning, hear Dick's "holloa" in Sywell Wood, a distance of at least three miles as the crow flies. This speaks well for the acoustic properties of the atmosphere between the respective points spoken of, as well as for the strength of Dick's lungs.' Those were days, by the way, when this strange rule of etiquette prevailed in the Pytchley, that no one except the huntsman might pass the Master when hounds were running.

The pressure of his official duties as First Lord of the Admiralty, and subsequently as Home Secretary, compelled the second Earl Spencer to give up the Mastership in 1796. He was a man of rare literary as well as sporting tastes. For twelve years he was

President of the Royal Institution, of which he was one of the original founders, and, before he died in 1834, he realised the unfulfilled ambition of the third Earl of Sunderland, by making the Althorp Library famous throughout the whole world of letters.

His son John Charles, the third Earl, best known in history as Lord Althorp, eclipsed the fame of his sire both in sport and politics. In 1808 he purchased the Pytchley hounds from that great 'Father of Foxhunting,' John Warde, for £1000, and hunted the country himself. The Pytchley Club, which had been abolished by John Warde, was revived in all its glory, and rare scenes of conviviality the Old Hall witnessed. It was a peculiar custom of the club that any member after dinner, on depositing half-a-crown in a wine-glass, might name and put up to auction the horse of any other member, the owner being entitled to one bid on his own behalf. It was on one of these occasions, Mr Nethercote tells us, that his grandfather sold his famous hunter 'Lancet' to Mr John Cook of Hothorp, for the then unprecedented sum of 620 guineas. The vendor, who was an old college chum of the purchaser, not wishing to take advantage of his friend's post-prandial rashness, offered the next morning to let him off his bargain. But Mr Cook indignantly refused, and was often heard to say afterwards that it was one of the best bargains he ever made in his life. A similar custom, by the way, prevailed in the Chumleigh Club in Devonshire, of which 'Jack' Russell was a member.

Lord Althorp is described by those who knew him in the hunting-field as a bold and determined, but very slovenly rider. His seat was loose, yet he was thoroughly at home in the saddle, and frequently rode from Spencer House, St James's, to Pytchley, a distance of seventy miles, for the next day's hunting. He was for ever dislocating his shoulder when out with hounds, and at last he sent one of his whips to Northampton Infirmary to get instructions as to the best and quickest way of putting it in again. What Dick Knight had been to his father, Charles King was to him, and there was no better huntsman in England. Lord Althorp kept a stud of thirty hunters and spent £5000 a year in hunting the Pytchley; but a bad fall in November 1817 so injured him that at the end of the season he resigned the Mastership to his old friend Sir Charles Knightley.

He was a keen all-round sportsman, and at one time the Prize Ring had no more ardent patron, but then that was in the palmy days of Belcher, Pearce (The Game Chicken), Gully and Cribb, when the British boxer was at least as worthy an object of public admiration as the Roman gladiator or the Spanish matador. Moreover, there cropped up in Lord Althorp the instincts of the ancestral grazier. He had a craze for shorthorns, gave enormous prices for them, and annually lost £3000 over them.

In Parliament his success was extraordinary, though he had none of the gifts which usually win distinction there. The caustic Greville thus refers to him in his 'Memoirs': 'The good-natured, popular, liked-and-laughed-at good fellow, more of a grazier than a statesman, without one showy accomplishment, without wit to amuse or eloquence to persuade, with a voice unmelodious and a manner ungraceful, and hardly able to speak plain sense in still plainer language, exercised in the House of Commons an influence, and even a dominion, greater than any leader either after or before him.' The secret of that influence lay in the fact that, as even his political opponents admitted, he was 'the very model and type of the English gentleman, ardently desiring the good of his country, without the slightest personal ambition, large-minded, unaffected, sensible.'

His end was worthy of him. In the winter of 1845, when he was acting with Lord George Bentinck as one of the stewards of Doncaster Races, he had a serious seizure of gout in the stomach. He knew that he was doomed, and awaited death quite calmly. He asked his brother Frederick to read over to him his last will and testament, and observing that 'Fred' was affected, he said cheerfully: 'Don't fret for me, my good fellow, I'm perfectly happy; and the happiness I have enjoyed in this life makes me hope that it will be granted to me in the next.' Brave old Pagan! Was there ever a more delightfully unorthodox or more illogically optimistic view of man's claim to felicity in a future state!

His brother, Admiral Frederick, the fourth Earl, was a bluff sailor, with not much taste for sport or politics, but with all the old family instinct of hospitality, and that keen interest in his estates which has made the Spencers for generations such excellent landlords.

John Poyntz Spencer, the fifth and present Earl, was born on the 27th of October 1835, and there are one or two octogenarian veterans still living who remember a certain day in Harleston Park, when a little frightened, shrinking four-year-old boy, on a pony led by a groom, was introduced to the field as Master Jack Spencer, and was formally 'blooded' by Charles Payne, the then huntsman of the Pytchley. Who would ever have dreamed that the timid, nervous child, who clung to the hand of his governess, was destined to develop into the iron-nerved 'Red Earl,' who has been aptly described as 'one of Ireland's greatest Viceroys, and one of England's most determined riders'?

It was not until after he left Harrow, and went to Cambridge, that the present earl showed even the faintest liking for the sport of which he has since become so distinguished an exponent. But it was in the political arena that he first made a name for himself.

As Lord Althorp he was, before the death of his father, M.P. for the southern division of Northamptonshire, and on the occasion of his first soliciting the votes of the constituency in 1857, heavy odds were laid that the youthful candidate would be 200 votes below the lowest of his opponents, who were Mr Rainald Knightley and Colonel Vyse. One old lady took the odds extensively, and while he was canvassing, said to him repeatedly, 'It's all right, my lord; your friends went before you.' And the old lady was all right, for the result of the poll was—Viscount Althorp, 2107; Mr Rainald Knightley, 1932; and Colonel Vyse, 1593. So that instead of being 200 below the lowest, he was 175 above the highest of his rivals.

His career in the House of Commons, however, was but brief, for on the death of his father at the close of 1857, he succeeded to the title and a seat 'in another place.' Meanwhile, the hereditary love of hunting had been steadily growing in him, and the interest which he took in the sport is manifested in the following extract from a letter to a friend, bearing date February 1858. He says: 'I was out riding on Friday, and knew by old Sir George's excitement that hounds were near. I am glad to hear of the death of one of the many Nobottle foxes. The one you tell me of, came, I presume, from

Dodford Holt; if so, that is not a bad line if you keep the Weedon and Brington road sufficiently to the left, and so cross those fine grass meadows. I should, indeed, have enjoyed the Saturday gallop you speak of, with Wizard or Meteor in their old form. I hope that the time may come when I shall drop in for a few such runs. I can count on my fingers every good day I have had with the Pytchley so far; so much have I been prevented by one cause or another from hunting regularly. I had a very sad parting with my dear old horses on Thursday last. I made up my mind to clear my stables, which were filled with a multitude of animals; many useless to me, and several nearly worn out. Reserving the two old favourites, and my sister's horse, I sent eighteen to Tattersall's. I had no idea, until the time arrived, how attached one can become to horses. I confess that I shed tears over Wizard and one or two others that neighed whenever they heard my footsteps, and whose every movement I knew exactly. Poor things! I long to hear that they have fallen into good hands.'

In 1859, on the resignation of the Hon. Fred. Villiers, who had hunted the Pytchley country for several years, Lord Spencer was unanimously voted to be the man to succeed that fine sportsman. He accepted the invitation, and, it is needless to say, asked for no subscription. It was generally admitted at the close of the first season that the new Master was one of the best the Pytchley had ever known. 'His manner in the field,' says one who then hunted regularly with the Pytchley, 'was always charming. He had a cheerful recognition for everybody. Noted as a bold and forward rider, no one who has seen him on his hands and knees, making personal inquiries as to the exact whereabouts of the wily animal who has taken refuge in a drain, can possibly doubt his enthusiasm in the noble science.'

It was during the period of his first Mastership—in 1863—that Lord Spencer was honoured with a visit from His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, who was pleased to seize an opportunity of showing that England's future king could hold his own over the big fences of the Pytchley country. That he was able to do so was shown in an afternoon gallop from Vanderplanks to Purser's Hills, when, in spite of a pace that was not well adapted to a welter weight, H.R.H. occupied an excellent place until choked off by the hill leading from Blueberries up to Mr Pell's house at Hazelbeach Hill, when he was fain to dismount, and, like any ordinary mortal, led his horse up to the summit of the ascent. The hounds at this point being out of sight, H.R.H. seemed to think that next to being present at the kill, 'a drop o' good beer' was the most desirable object at that moment, so pulling up at Mr Pell's house, he quickly slaked a 'hill-born' thirst in a flagon of Burton ale. A cigar about the size of a sausage-roll was quickly transferred to his lips, and the late formidable ascent soon formed the downward path on his road back to Althorp.

Thorough and conscientious in the discharge of every duty he has ever undertaken, Lord Spencer gave himself up, heart and soul, to the duties of Mastership, and worked with such unflagging energy that his health, at that time far from strong, broke down under the strain, and, to the intense regret of every member of the Hunt, he was compelled, in 1864, to resign his post to Colonel Anstruther Thomson and seek recuperation in Egypt. For the next three years he wintered abroad, and then, in 1868, a new field for his energies was opened by his appointment to the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland, under Mr Gladstone's Administration.

That his thoughts still, however, flew back to the sport he loved, is proved by the following letter, written in December 1869, and quoted by Mr. H. O. Nethercote in his 'History of the Pytchley Hunt.'

'We are comparatively quiet just now. Irish affairs are undergoing a crisis, as must always be the case where great changes are taking place. They who are benefited are too accustomed to their old grievances to become champions of law and order, and the agitators do not distinguish between real and fictitious evils. I am satisfied, however, that patience and perseverance in doing justice, and acting with impartiality, will eventually bear their fruit. Those who have to deal with all this will have their equanimity sorely tried, and must wear a thick skin.' The writer then goes on to say:—'I have had some gallops with the Ward Staghounds to keep me going. A sharp ride to covert and a good thirty minutes have kept me from collapsing. There is nothing like a good gallop across country, even to staghounds, to drive dull care away. Three hours' forgetfulness of a worry gives one a new start. We had a very good run two days ago, fifteen miles from start to take. I had the satisfaction of being in first: only five others up at all.'

On a later occasion the Lord-Lieutenant was quite alone when the stag was captured after a good run. The Dublin journals loudly proclaimed the feat of one man, and that man no other than the Viceroy himself, beating the whole field, and that field a 'Ward Union' one. The news of this performance having elicited some inquiries from a Pytchley friend, Lord Spencer replied as follows:—'My stag-hunting adventure was very funny. After carrying me well up to the hounds for about twelve minutes or so, my horse fell into a blind ditch attached to a fence, which would have staggered any field unaccustomed to Irish "obstacles." I lost a little time in getting my horse out, also my place among the first few. When I got up to the road where I lost sight of the leading men, I fell in with the huntsman heading the second flight. He made me gallop a particular way, but finding that that was wrong, he turned back, knowing that it would be of no use. After going about twenty minutes, I saw what is called "the Hunt," and expected to catch it over a hill just in front of me. To my surprise, up came the stag, right to me, presently three couple of hounds, and then eight couple more, but no one in sight. Of course I followed this lot, and had about three miles of splendid country all to myself. When the stag was taken, not a soul was to be seen, nor did a horseman appear in sight until I had got to a road five fields off, with the hounds, not one of whom knew me. Some labourers appeared, who drove them to me; but when they disappeared, as they soon did, off went my reluctant followers. In about ten minutes a stray man appeared, and ten minutes later the whip, but not a soul besides.'

Apropos to this letter Mr Nethercote quotes the following remarkable experience of a Mr Green, given in his own words: 'Another curious thing which I saw during my visit to Ireland, was a stag, hounds, and horses all run to a stand-still, or, at least, to such a state of exhaustion that none of them could move so fast as I could walk. I was sitting by myself one afternoon, when I heard the cry of hounds as if crossing the park.

I ran out, came up with them, and had no difficulty in keeping up with them. Only five or six horsemen were near, and their horses looked as if they had not a leg to stand upon, and could scarcely raise a walk. We all went down to the river, and from one of its pools out jumped the stag all amongst the hounds. He just managed to hobble along for a few yards up the slope of the green meadow, with the dogs lopping along beside him, and just behind him, when he came to a few very low hurdles. He could only just get his forelegs over them, and then fell right among the leading hounds. He kicked out right and left with his hind legs, scattered his pursuers, turned down again towards the river, tumbled over the hurdles once more, shook himself free from his enemies, and again sought the water. The hounds were now whipped off, and some rustics plunging into the water, the leg-weary animal was secured. Though quite unable to run, it was surprising to see the courage and strength he still retained. He fought and struggled with head and neck, and it required the efforts of some strong men to make him go in the direction they required. I was afterwards shown a place in the park where he had fallen, through being unable to jump a ditch not above two or three feet wide, with a fence about a foot high.'

It was during his first tenure of office in Ireland that Lord Spencer expressed a strong wish that Mr Craven, who was then Master of the Pytchley, should bring his hounds to Dublin for a week's hunting in the Meath country, but, owing to an unfortunate accident to Dick Roake the huntsman, the interesting event did not come off. The Lord-Lieutenant, however, was determined that Irish sportsmen should see how the Pytchley men could ride, and he therefore invited six of his tenant farmers to come over for a week's hunting, undertaking to mount each of them and pay all expenses. The invitation was eagerly accepted, and, mounted on the pick of the basket from the Vice-regal stables, those six sturdy English fox-hunters did credit to the land that bore them ; indeed, they astonished the 'bruisers' of Meath, by the ease with which they found their way across an unknown and difficult country.

On the fall of Mr Gladstone's Ministry in 1874, Lord Spencer was released from the cares of office, and once more took up the Mastership of the Pytchley. In 1877, owing to an accident to Goodall, the huntsman, his lordship took the horn himself and proved himself a perfect workman, gifted with that patience and self-possession which are the essentials of a true huntsman. Like the sixth Duke of Beaufort, he could give a stinging rebuke in the most polite language. On one occasion in 1877 he had requested Captain Riddell to give him a lead over an awkward place out of a wood. The Captain did so ; but, before Lord Spencer could follow, a thrusting stranger jumped right across in front of him and 'scattered' him. Instead of bursting into a torrent of abuse, Lord Spencer said quietly, 'I am very much obliged to you, sir; upon my word, I am. *Did you come far to do this?*' But urbane and courteous though he always was, he could nevertheless be a very stern disciplinarian.

'No regiment of dragoons,' says Mr Nethercote, 'was kept under stricter discipline than a Pytchley field at the time of which we are speaking. Woe betide the adventurous wight who risked a short cut to the next "draw," or in any way seemed out of the place which in the eyes of the Master was his proper one. Even the homeward-bound horseman, far on his road, met with a bad time if the fox, chancing to cross his path, altered his course, and caused a momentary check. Turning round upon one occasion in a Holdenby pasture to rebuke some horsemen who, as he thought, were following too closely upon the hounds, the Master found himself reproaching a small band of shorthorn brothers, who, with whisk of tail and downward motion of the head, seemed to treat with defiance the half-uttered remark of the noble but incensed huntsman.'

During Lord Spencer's second Mastership of the Pytchley, the Empress of Austria, who had taken Cottesbrook Park for a couple of months, hunted regularly with the hounds. Her pilot was that gallant and popular sportsman, Captain W. G. Middleton, generally known as 'Bay' Middleton, whose tragic death in the hunting-field was deeply deplored by all who knew him. The Empress was a brilliant horsewoman, and followed 'Bay' Middleton's lead with great coolness and pluck, though she sometimes caused Lord Spencer anxiety by taking a line of her own over big places which few even of the first flight cared to face.

Her Imperial Majesty was a strong believer in the virtues of good English malt and hops, and on more than one occasion, when offered tea, she exclaimed in her own charming way, somewhat to the astonishment of her hostess, 'Oh, please let me have some beer, it will do me so much more good!'

On one occasion when Mr Gladstone was a guest at Althorp, there was great excitement among the field, owing to the announcement that the 'Grand Old Man' would appear at the Meet. But, to the disappointment of all, the great statesman contented himself with a brief and hurried view of the animated scene on the lawn from the terrace, and hurried into the famous library, where he found more congenial pastime. The only remark he was heard to make upon the stirring spectacle which had so little attraction for him was:—'The farmers cannot be so badly off or they would not ride such beautiful horses as those I saw this morning.'

When Mr Gladstone came back to power in 1880, Lord Spencer once more laid down the horn of the huntsman and took up the portfolio of the statesman. His first office was that of Lord President of the Council, but on the resignation of Earl Cowper he was persuaded again to assume the onerous duties of Viceroy of Ireland. He arrived in Dublin on the evening of that memorable 6th of May when Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr Thomas Burke were brutally murdered in Phœnix Park. It was a cruel welcome back to the Castle, but during all the terrible and trying time that followed, Lord Spencer bore himself with a firmness, a dignity and a courage which excited the admiration of even his bitterest political opponents.

In 1890 Lord Spencer became for the third time Master of one of the finest packs and most delightful hunting countries in the three kingdoms. But in 1894 he finally resigned the Mastership of the Pytchley, and was succeeded by Mr W. M. Wroughton. The sportsmen of Northamptonshire, than whom there are none keener in England, swear by the 'Red Earl' as a model Master of Foxhounds; his tenants declare him to be the best of landlords; and society in general is agreed that no truer gentleman has ever borne the honoured name of Spencer.

George Lane Fox

GEORGE LANE FOX.

THAT a Fox should hunt a fox seems something of an anomaly, but whether the ancient family of Fox derived their name originally from any supposed affinity with the crafty animal which so many of them have gained renown from hunting, is a question I am not prepared to answer. Possibly the surname Fox in this case is a corruption of some other name, and had originally no connection whatever with Reynard. The earliest mention of the house, which has since become so well-known in Yorkshire, occurs, I believe, in the records of the reign of Edward IV, when a certain William Fox, by marriage with the daughter of John de Grete, became possessed of the lands of Grete in Worcestershire. From that time Foxes crop up from time to time as squires, parsons, barristers and soldiers—a race of gentry they were, who scorned to soil their hands with trade, a fact of which, as will appear subsequently, they were immensely proud.

In the year 1691 Henry Fox married, as his second wife, the Hon. Frances Lane, daughter of Sir George Lane of Tulske in the county Roscommon, who, for his services as Principal Secretary of State in Ireland, was created Viscount Lanesborough. The Hon. Frances was co-heir with her brother James of the Lanesborough estates, and, on the death of the latter without issue, her son George Fox, M.P. for the city of York, inherited, by right of his mother, all the estates of Lord Lanesborough, and added the name of Lane to his own. George Fox Lane, for so the names were placed for several generations, married, in 1731, Harriet, daughter and sole heir of Robert, Lord Bingley, Chancellor of the Exchequer under Queen Anne, and Treasurer of the Household to George II, who granted him for his services a large part of the extensive Bramham Moor in Yorkshire. Lord Bingley reclaimed a great portion of the Moor, and built himself a fine mansion with singularly beautiful gardens and grounds, planned by an eminent Italian landscape gardener. He called his seat Bramham Park. On his death in 1730, his daughter inherited the whole of his estates, worth £7000 a year, besides £100,000 in the funds. Thirty years after his marriage to her, in 1762, George Fox Lane was allowed by letters patent to take the title of his father-in-law, Baron Bingley, but, as his son died childless before him, the title became extinct, and the English and Irish estates descended to the nephew of the deceased Baron, James Fox Lane, who died in 1825, leaving all his landed property to his eldest son, George Lane Fox (who transposed the names), and nearly half a million of money to his widow and the younger children.

James Fox Lane was an intimate friend of George IV, who, as Prince of Wales, frequently visited Bramham Park and enjoyed the hunting there, for His Royal Highness in his youthful days rode as straight and well to hounds as his present successor did before increasing bulk compelled him, too, to forego the pleasures of the Chase. James Fox Lane was also a personal friend of William Pitt the younger, who offered to revive the peerage of Bingley in his behalf. Then it was that Fox Lane, in declining the offer, made the memorable reply: 'I beg to decline the honour you offer me, for I belong to one of the very few really old English families, and I am a commoner (not a trader), of high birth and fortune, and I pique myself on that.' This was a kind of pride which none could appreciate better than the son of 'The Great Commoner' himself, and he probably thought all the more highly of Fox Lane for refusing the proffered peerage.

That James Fox Lane was a keen sportsman and maintained a considerable hunting establishment is certain. But whether, as tradition asserts, hounds were kept at Wothersome, on the borders of Bramham Moor, in the time of Queen Anne is more than doubtful. In a brief biography of Mr George Lane Fox which appeared in *Baily's Magazine* the writer says: 'Famous as Yorkshire has been from time immemorial for her packs of hounds there is none, perhaps, dates longer back than the Bramham Moor, which had been in Mr Fox's family since the latter part of the reign of Queen Anne, when Mr Lane, who was a son of Lord Bingley, kept them at the Wothersome Dog-kennels near Bramham Park. Mr Lane was succeeded in the Mastership first by Sir Thomas Gascoyne, and secondly by Sir Walter Vavasour.' I do not know what authority the writer had for this statement, but it is manifestly incorrect—for, in the first place, the first Lord Bingley had no son, and in the second place, the grant of land on Bramham Moor was not made to him till the reign of George II. The Mr Lane to whom the writer refers was George Fox Lane, who married the daughter and heiress of Lord Bingley after that nobleman's decease, and was subsequently created by special grant Baron Bingley, but he did not marry till 1731, and therefore could have had no connection with the Bramham Park estate till after that date.

Be this as it may, however, the Bramham Moor hounds can, at any rate, trace their origin back as far as James Fox Lane, who hunted the country from about 1775 till not long before his death in 1825.

Of the early history of the Bramham Moor Hounds, and their first anthenticated Master, Mr James Fox Lane, the following interesting particulars are given by the authors of 'Country Quarters': 'Mr James Fox of Bramham Park was in his younger days much on the move. But, having married the Hon. Marcia Pitt, sister of Lord Rivers, he settled to the life of a country gentleman, and established a well-appointed pack of foxhounds, which he kept at Bramham Park, in kennels close to the spot, though not the same as now. He was a man of good manners, hospitable and courteous to all; not a pushing horseman, but a good judge of horse and hound, and, being a friend and contemporary of Hugo Meynell, took much pains in improving hounds, and obtaining good blood. He had for many years during the latter part of his Mastership, a huntsman by name Martin Walkerley, a first-rate man, who, though rather stout, was well mounted, and could live well with his hounds. Old Martin was famed for a beautiful view halloa! He died in 1821. The splendid woods near Selby and Cawood were in those days full of foxes, marten cats, and woodcocks—alas! now only game. There was a Bramham Moor Hunt Club, with a coat and button worn by Mr Fox's friends. The hunting-coat, scarlet, silver button, with a fox and "forward" on it.

The club dined at the inn at Aberford once a month during the hunting season—then the fun was fast and furious. All the neighbourhood made a point of attending to support Mr Fox Lane; then he proposed "Bramham Moor, and the twenty-five couple," and sang a good song.

'As the evening crept on, "May Bramham Moor never be without a *fox!*" and, by stout old gents, "May Bramham Moor never be without a *Lane!*" were excuses for one glass more. The whole country preserved foxes, and everybody hunted.'

Among the notable sportsmen who at that time hunted with the Bramham Moor was Fenton Scott of Woodhall, one of the most remarkable men of his day—six feet four inches, very thin, very strong, very handsome, but with a club foot, from an injury when a child. He began life in a dragoon regiment, and was not to be beaten over a country. Once, travelling down from London by the mail, whilst eating his breakfast at Grantham, he asked the waiter if the Belvoir hounds met near, and if he could hire a horse in the town. The waiter said, 'Yes, sir, certainly.' He gave up his place on the mail, hired a horse, and met the hounds. They had a capital run; towards the end the field turned from hounds to avoid a well-known awkward place; Fenton Scott never turned, the hounds pulled down the fox. When Goosey, the huntsman, arrived he found this curious man sitting on a gate, the pads and brush cut off. 'Whoo-whoop!' he cried, and chucked up the fox; handing the pads and nose to the huntsman, said, 'Good run; hounds worked well,' got on his horse and trotted off.

The Duke, Lord Forester, etc., were anxious to know who this was, sent to Grantham, found that the Yorkshire gentleman had bought the horse, and gone on to the North by coach that afternoon. Fenton Scott was an excellent magistrate, and a kind-hearted man, but, when excited, a little rough, and talked broad Yorkshire. Whilst hunting once, away from home, he got a bad fall, and crushed his deformed foot, grew alarmed, sent for the surgeon, but never said anything, till the Sawbones suggested the necessity of amputation; then up jumped the patient, and roaring out, 'Aw! deary me, sir! I came into the world wi' two legs; and, by jingo, I'll go out wi' two!' kicked him out of the room.

James Fox Lane, as I have said, hunted the country from about 1775 till not long before his death in 1825, when, finding himself too old for the duties of Master and his son disinclined to relieve him of the responsibility, he made the hounds over to Lord Harewood, who removed the kennels to Harewood House, where they remained for many years. In fact, it was not till the year 1848 that they came back to their original home, and into the hands of the son of their former owner. But this Mr Lane Fox died within a few months of the return of the hounds, leaving his son, the greatest and most famous sportsman of the family, to restore and increase tenfold the name and fame of the Bramham Moor Hunt.

Mr George Lane Fox, whose recent death is still mourned by Yorkshire sportsmen, was born in November 1816, and was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford. But as a friend of his said: 'Instead of trying for a double first, he preferred becoming a private pupil of Tom Hill and Tom Wingfield, learning how to gallop after a fox with the former and hunt him with the latter.' The young Yorkshireman carried his enthusiasm for the Chase so far, that when at last he blossomed out into the full-blown Master of the Christ Church Draghounds, the horrified Dons hinted to him that, as kennels and stables were evidently more congenial to him than college lecture-rooms and chapel, he had better take his name off the books. This he very willingly did, and shaking the dust of unappreciative Oxford from his shoes, went back to his native shire, married the daughter of Mr George Stein, sometime M.P. for Bletchingley, and settled down to the life of a country gentleman at Bramham Park. He seldom visited London except to see the Derby run, and then it was not so much for the pleasure of watching the race as for the delight of driving the Glasgow mail (this was, of course, in pre-railway times), from Tadcaster to Alconbury Hill, a distance of one hundred and forty-five miles, after which last-named stage, as it was by that time dark, he resigned the ribbons to the professional coachman.

In 1848 Mr George Lane Fox commenced his long reign as Master of the Bramham Moor, which only terminated with his lamented death in 1896, a period of just upon fifty years. During that time he endeared himself to every one with whom he came in contact. When circumstances compelled him to ask for a subscription, the gentry and farmers came forward eagerly, ready to give him thrice as much as he asked for. What his tenants thought of him as a landlord may be gathered from the fact that forty years ago they spontaneously and unanimously offered *to raise their rents for him!* an offer which is, I imagine, unique in the history of landlordism. He was deeply touched by this remarkable testimony of the affection with which his tenants regarded him, but he gratefully declined the offer. Whereupon the tenants had his portrait painted by Sir Francis Grant, President of the Royal Academy, representing him on his favourite hunter Courtier. The picture was presented to Mrs Lane Fox, accompanied by an address which expressed, in terms of the deepest feeling, their love and respect for her husband and herself.

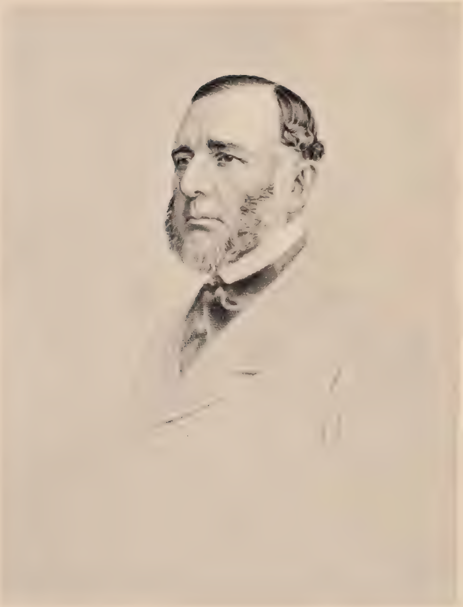
The following passage from the spirited pen of 'Brooksby' will convey some idea of the estimation in which Mr Lane Fox, as a Master of Foxhounds, was held by those most competent to judge.

'We have no hesitation in saying that the Bramham Moor pack has few superiors among the leading kennels of England. Here is the result, not only of a lifetime, but of the lifetime of one of the most consummate judges of a foxhound in England, based upon the inherited possession of strains of blood from the best and oldest sources. For racing quality, and sturdy strength—for clean, light symmetry, and thorough working points—the pack at Bramham stands out a living testimony to the management that has created it, and a study and delight to the novice who would learn how foxhounds should be built. Perhaps some of the most successful blood in the kennel was an infusion thrown into it from the original stock of old John Warde's pack, Mr Lane Fox having purchased five couple at Mr Wyndham's sale at Tattersall's. This had been lying for some generations in Hampshire, when Mr Lane Fox chanced upon the opportunity of buying five couple of the strain, which eventually was found to blend admirably with the Belvoir, Brocklesby, and other choice blood.

'The kennels in Bramham Park are the only part of the ancestral establishment now occupied—the beautiful old hall having been destroyed by fire some seventy years ago and now standing, a magnificent ruin, in the midst of all the same picturesque and carefully tended surroundings that then made it one of the ornaments of the neighbourhood. The walls, columns, and perfect proportions of the old mansion still remain uninjured; the avenues and gardens are as beautifully kept, and the park as trim and well-timbered as ever. The stables are full of horses, and the kennels hold by no means the least valued heirlooms of the house. But the wind wanders where it will among the roofless and windowless walls; and a spreading tree has reared itself over the very doorstep.'

Mr George Lane Fox has sometimes been called 'The Assheton Smith of the North,' but there was really little resemblance between the two men, even in their conduct of the sport of which both were such eminent exponents. Mr Lane Fox could always keep his temper under control, and not even the large unruly fields, recruited from the big manufacturing towns, with crowds of colliers on foot to add to the confusion, ever provoked him into swearing. Yet he kept them in order by his bluff sarcasms, which, though uttered in perfect good-temper, sometimes hit those at whom they were aimed very hard indeed. Those who have heard his after-luncheon speeches at the Bramham Moor Puppy Shows, will remember that while he could keep the table in a roar with his humorous sallies, he could also speak out his mind with remarkable vigour. He had fought an uphill battle—with pheasant preservers offering five shillings a head for foxes, and other unpleasantnesses to face—but, with Charles Treadwell at his right hand he forced his way victoriously over all obstacles, and made his hounds and his country famous.

Mr George Lane Fox died on the 2nd of November 1896, on the very day on which his own hounds were to open the season at Stockfield Park. The scene at the graveside, as this Nestor of Northern sport was laid in his last resting-place, was a touching one. The rain fell in torrents, yet from far and wide, high and low, rich and poor, Liberals and Tories, had gathered to do honour to the memory of the most generous landowner and the most perfect Master of Hounds they had ever known—a man with no enemies, and troops of friends. Among the many wreaths which covered the coffin was one that attracted special notice, not only from the rank of the donor, but for the inscription it bore, which faithfully summed up the dead man's character. 'In memory of a fine old English sportsman and gentleman, as a mark of true regard and respect from Albert Edward, P.'



H. Fillebrow

THE FAMILY OF VILLEBOIS.

No one who looks at the portrait of Mr Henry Villebois on the preceding page, would set him down as anything but a typical English gentleman, the descendant of a long line of honest Englishmen. Yet his descent, like his name, was unmistakably French, and the family had not been domiciled in this country for more than two generations when the three brothers, whose names are familiar to all hunting men, showed how completely they had become acclimatised to English sports.

When they first left their French home, the Villebois made for Ireland, where they had been settled for a generation or more, when William Villebois came over to London and married a daughter of Sir Benjamin Truman, the founder of the great brewing firm of Truman, Hanbury, and Buxton, who then ranked third among the great London brewers, Calvert & Co., and Whitbread being respectively first and second. William Villebois had three sons, John Truman, Henry, and Frederick Read Orme, all of whom were well-known sportsmen. John Truman, the eldest, and his brother Henry, became, on attaining their majority, partners in the great brewery, from which each of them derived a very handsome income. Neither of them, however, took any active part in the business.

John Truman, who was educated at Harrow and Christ Church, Oxford, settled, when he was about three-and-twenty, at Preston Candover, in Hampshire, and at once started a pack of harriers. Now, these harriers occasionally ran a fox, and one day in November 1803 they got on the line of a straight goer from Preston Wood, ran him for ten miles without a check and rolled him over handsomely in Amory Wood between Alton and Shalden. This brilliant run brought consequences which Mr Villebois had not foreseen. That part of Hampshire was then hunted by the foxhounds of Mr Russell of Greywell, a wealthy solicitor from Essex, who had married the dashing and fascinating Lady Betty Bermingham, the daughter of an Irish peer and one of the reigning *belles* of her day. Lady Betty was a brilliant horsewoman, like so many daughters of Erin before and since her time, and it was quite as much her desire to cut a figure in the hunting-field as his own love of sport that induced Mr Russell to get together a pack of hounds, on the sale of those which had belonged to Lord Southampton and Colonel Beaver. With these foxhounds he hunted from Greywell what is now the H.H. country, and Lady Betty, in a scarlet habit, became a conspicuous and familiar figure among the hard-riding Hampshire foxhunters.

When Mr Russell heard that Mr John Truman Villebois had killed a good fox with his harriers, he was extremely angry at what he thought an unsportsmanlike trespass upon his preserves, and, meeting Mr Villebois not long afterwards, gave that gentleman a piece of his mind in very forcible terms. Mr Villebois made a warm retort, whereupon Mr Russell exclaimed, 'Then you had better hunt the country yourself.' Whereupon

Mr Villebois snapped eagerly at the chance. 'If you really mean what you say, sir, I shall be delighted to do so.' Mr Russell, thus taken literally at his word, was too proud and indignant to withdraw, and surlily shut up his hunting establishment, selling his hounds to Mr Villebois, who, to the delight of his neighbours, started hunting the country in a style which had never been known there before. It is pleasant to be able to add that the feud between him and Mr Russell soon ceased, and the Master of Greywell became one of the staunchest supporters of the new *régime*. The latter was too keen a lover of the sport to be able to give it up. He used to say that he never committed any sins during the hunting season, because he hunted six days a week and went to church twice on Sundays, consequently he had never time to do anything sinful.

Mr John Truman Villebois' ample means enabled him to keep up the H.H. entirely at his own expense. He would not allow even a single earth to be stopped at any one's cost but his own. He had as his first huntsman, John Major, a fine horseman and as clever a man in the kennel and the hunting-field as there was in England. But unfortunately he had one fatal weakness—an insatiable thirst which he tried to quench with gin. He wore out the patience even of his kind-hearted master by his habitual intemperance, lost his post, and went gradually down till he came to breaking stones on the high road and died in the workhouse.

Mr John Truman Villebois was also a member of the original Hambledon Club, and in 1805 became sole Master of the Hambledon Hounds, which he hunted in splendid style till 1837, a period which old sportsmen will tell you constituted the Golden Age of fox-hunting in Hampshire. His average for years was forty brace, and he generally killed a May fox. Naturally, so keen and liberal a sportsman was extremely popular. He was very firm with the field, but never forgot that he was a gentleman. By his hunt-servants he was idolised, and he showed what a generous interest he took in them by leaving every one that had ever been in his service a handsome annuity at his death.

The second brother, Henry, was also a sportsman, but of a somewhat different type. He was 'in' with the Regency set, was one of the Prince's intimates in fact, and as a coachman had few, if any, superiors even among his fellow-members of the famous Benson Driving Club. At his fine country-seat, Marham House, near Downham in Norfolk, he kept both stag-hounds and harriers on a scale commensurate with his large income and liberal tastes.

The third brother, Frederick Read Orme, served for some time in the 16th Light Dragoons, and on his retirement lived first at Adderbury in Oxfordshire, and then at Benham Park, Bedfordshire, a mansion formerly occupied by the Margrave of Anspach, who married the widow of William, Lord Craven. In 1835, Frederick Villebois succeeded Thomas ('Gentleman') Smith, as Master of the Craven hounds. There were thus three brothers at one and the same time Masters of Hounds, and I believe there is no similar instance on record. Ben Foote came from Mr Drake as huntsman to Mr Frederick Villebois, and his first whip was John Fiddler, who long kept the King's Arms at Newbury, and whose son Charles was for some time Boniface of the 'Old Bell' in Leicester Square. Like his two elder brothers, Frederick was a very rich man, and hunted the Craven country in grand style, entirely at his own expense. His hounds and hunt-servants were despatched to more distant meets in a huge four-horse van, which was probably the largest vehicle on wheels in existence. On his death in 1851, he bequeathed his hounds and £1500 to the Craven Hunt.

But better known, at any rate to the present generation, than any one of the three I have mentioned, was Henry Villebois, the surviving son of the first-named Henry, who, on the death of his father in 1847, succeeded to the Norfolk estate, and whose portrait graces these pages. Henry, the second, was 'blooded' by his uncle John Truman's famous huntsman Dick Foster, who had no superior in his profession among his contemporaries. From his boyhood Henry's greatest delight had been to sit at Dick Foster's feet in his uncle's Hampshire kennels, and drink in the words of wisdom and experience which fell from the lips of that crafty veteran. 'He studied the hound-book,' says a writer in *Baily's Magazine*, 'with as much earnestness as a candidate for the Civil Service would do Hallam's "Middle Ages," or Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," and, with the exception of Mr Williamson, brother-in-law of Lord Zetland, who, when at a private tutor's, used to make his fag hear him go through and cross-examine him in "The Lambton Kennel-Book," a more enthusiastic lover of the Chase was probably never known.'

In 1849 Mr Henry Villebois began hunting on his own account, by buying the Vale of White Horse Pack from the committee, and adding to them the Hertfordshire, which he had also purchased. It was during his mastership of the V.W.H. that the following extraordinary incident happened, which is thus described by the authors of 'Country Quarters' (Mr W. N. Heysham and the late Mr J. Nevill Fitt), in *Baily's Magazine* :—

'In the year 1851, on Wednesday the 24th December, the Vale of White Horse met at the "Three Magpies." A fox was found in Lea Wood, the property of Mr Raymond Barker, and ran towards Fairford Park. In the corner of a field an old pump was discernible, and near it a gap in the hedge ; and a scene here occurred which could never have been witnessed elsewhere. As Mr Henry Pole was making for this gap, his horse's hind-quarters sank, and it became invisible ; slowly also his rider disappeared, and then his horse's head, and lastly, the pump followed also. A lady and a gentleman, Mr and Mrs Croome, were riding close by, and saw this dreadful occurrence ; Mr Croome at once gave his horse to be held, and rushed and offered his whip to Mr Pole. His position, when first seen, was standing on the pommel of his saddle, with his hands endeavouring to fasten themselves into the joints of the wall of the well. He gladly availed himself of the whip, but there was only sufficient strength at the top to hold him. On this, Mr Ernest Bowley came to the rescue, and Mr Pole was immediately drawn to the surface. But then the difficulty arose how the horse was to be extricated ; he plunged violently till he was quite exhausted, and was wedged in by the pump standing upright behind him, with his hind legs just touching the *débris* of the broken wall at the bottom of the well. A rope having been sent for, Mr Croome succeeded in tying one end round each fore-leg, and a noose round his neck, and as by this time a large crowd had assembled, with their united exertions the horse was extricated *unhurt* from his hazardous position. This day ended in a famous run.'

Ill-health compelled Mr Villebois to give up the V.W.H. in 1854, but after a severe attack of fever at Plymouth, which nearly proved fatal to him, he recruited his shattered constitution by a prolonged yachting cruise, and in 1857 was once more able to take an active part in the sport to which he was so passionately attached. He became Master of the West Norfolk, and hunted that country till 1875 in a style which endeared him to the sportsmen of East Anglia. The hospitality he dispensed at Marham House was princely; everything he did was done as perfectly as it was possible for unlimited expenditure of time, thought, and money to compass.

He was, like his father, a first-rate coachman, and there was not a more popular or enthusiastic patron of the Leash in all East Anglia than Henry Villebois. The Market Downham Meeting owed to his liberal patronage the prestige which made it noted among coursing fixtures, and there was no form of out-door sport which he was not ever ready to help with his purse and patronage. Frank, generous, open-hearted and open-handed, the soul of honour, a right royal host, and a sportsman without fear and without reproach, Henry Villebois was indeed the very type and model of a fine old English squire. It is sad to think that he should have been the last of a race of such good sportsmen and true gentlemen. When he died in March 1886, at the ripe age of seventy-nine, the direct male line of Villebois died with him, and Marham House is now the property of his sister, Eve Maria, Viscountess Glentworth, to whom her brother bequeathed his Norfolk estates.

MASTERS OF THE MEATH.

IT will, I suppose, be generally conceded, at any rate by Englishmen, that the Meath country is the best in Ireland. But it was not always so considered, and, indeed, it is only within comparatively recent years that Meath, with its peerless pastures, has successfully asserted its claim to be regarded as the Irish Leicestershire. In the good old days of those hard-drinking, hard-riding Irish squires whose rollicking dare-devil feats Charles Lever has immortalised in *Charles O'Malley*, *Harry Lorrequer*, *Jack Hinton*, and *Tom Burke of Ours*, Meath was hardly recognised as a hunting country. The typical Irish foxhunter of that period cared for little but 'lepping' of the maddest kind. Stone walls were a joy to him; the glories of a gallop over grass lands would have had no attraction whatever for him. It required a more advanced civilisation, a more refined taste in hunting, to appreciate the beauties of Meath.

Time was when Kilkenny was reckoned first among Irish hunting countries, when Sir John Power sent its fame ringing across the channel, till even Meltonians were tempted to come over and test the boasted splendours of its sport. Nor were they disappointed; for, they found there the stoutest of foxes and the keenest of sportsmen. It must have been a model hunt to inspire the Saxon bard thus to chant its praises :—

> 'No jealousy here mars the charm of a run,
> No jostling when going, no boasting when done.
> Good fellows they're all, whether cautious or bold,
> And kind fellowship reigns thro' the young and the old.'

But Kilkenny has too much plough and too little pasture to suit the tastes of your modern foxhunter.

For a brief space the Watsons made the Carlow country famous and fashionable. But its glory faded when Sir John Kennedy lifted Kildare to the place Kilkenny once occupied, and a succession of able masters kept it there, such men as Mr La Touche, Lord Clonmell, Lord Mayo, Baron de Robeck—a galaxy of hunting talent the like to which the records of no other country in Ireland can produce. The Kildare Hunt Meeting and Punchestown Races helped at times to swell the fields to huge proportions, and it is an authenticated fact that on one occasion, on an April day, just after Punchestown, there were no fewer than *thirteen* English Masters of Hounds seen out with the hounds over which Colonel de Robeck now so ably presides.

Then there were the far-famed Galway Blazers, whose renown was great in the days when that grand sportsman, Mr Burton Parsons Persse of Moyode Castle hunted the country and proved emphatically that *he* was 'the man for Galway.'

Whilst all these 'dogs' were having their 'day' Meath was

> 'In darkness lost—the darkness of the grave,'

so far as the outside hunting public was concerned. In prehistoric days every squire of any substance kept a few hounds for his personal amusement, and now and then, on some rare and grand occasion, these isolated units would meet for a combined day's sport. But there was no systematic hunting of the country until several prominent sportsmen agreed to throw their hounds together into a united pack, whose head-quarters were at Clongill Castle, and whose first Master was Mr Waller of Allenstown. To him succeeded Mr Hopkins, who in his turn gave place to Mr Trench Nugent, but no records of sport in those dark ages have been preserved.

Mr Trench Nugent left the country in 1852 to hunt an English Midland pack; he had been seven years Master of the Meath, and was the first to reduce chaos into order there, thus paving the way for his renowned successor and brother-in-law, Sam Reynell, who really founded the fortunes of the Meath, and well deserved the title of 'the Meynell of Ireland,' bestowed on him by his admirers. Sam Reynell had every gift that goes to the making of a first-rate Master of Hounds. His great stature and commanding mien overawed the field. His enthusiasm for the sport infected all who came within his influence; his energy was unflagging. The longest day could not tire his iron frame. His fiery dash and daring were tempered by a shrewdness which kept him from sacrificing the science to the sport of hunting.

The country he hunted covered a vast area, seventy miles by twenty, the greater part of which consisted of old pastures, as fine as the very cream of the English Midlands, and far larger in extent. Only one thing was lacking to make the country an ideal one for fox-hunting, and that was the presence of woodlands and coverts in which the foxes might lie and breed. This defect Reynell set himself to remedy by dotting the grazing lands with gorse and stick coverts. Then, indeed, Meath be-

J B Trotter

came the paradise of hard riders—*the* hunting country of Ireland *par excellence.* When Lord Spencer came over first as Viceroy in 1868 he and his sporting staff revelled in the Meath pastures, which some of them declared to surpass the Shires, and even, like 'Chicken' Hartopp, the long-legged Quornite, as reckless a madcap as the wildest Irishman of them all, throwing up their allegiance to Quorn and Pytchley and Belvoir and Cottesmore, thenceforward cast in their lot with the Meath. For twenty years Sam Reynell ruled the destinies of the Meath, and when circumstances compelled him to resign the Mastership in 1872, the grateful sportsmen for whom he had so splendidly catered presented him with a purse of £4000 as a token of their admiration for the untiring zeal and magnificent management by which he had raised Meath from the lowest to the highest place among the hunting countries of Ireland.

His successor was Mr William Newcomen Waller of Allenstown, a son of the first Master of the united Meath pack. For five seasons young Mr Waller, with Macbride as his huntsman, did his best to show sport. But he ha not the physique to enable him to hunt such a country, and, realising that he was only ruining his health in the attempt, he wisely resigned in 1877.

Then came, perhaps, the greatest Master the Meath has ever had, greater even than Sam Reynell—Mr John Oswald Trotter, known to all hunting men as 'Jock' Trotter.

Mr Trotter came of a good old Scottish family, the Trotters of Morton Hall, which claimed descent from one William of that ilk who was 'a captain for keeping the peace of the Border' in 1373; and it was a fond boast of 'Jock' Trotter's that an ancestor of his was with 'the doughty Earl of Douglas,' what time he crossed the Border and 'harried the dales o' Tyne,' till 'the proud Lord Percy' met him at Otterburn on that fateful day which both the great houses had cause to mourn for many a year. And well 'Jock' knew the grand old ballad in which the story of that fierce fight is told—a ballad unsurpassed in our language for beauty and pathos. Sir Walter Scott was not ashamed to confess that the tears always came into his eyes when he read the last words of the dying Douglas, anxious that his fall should be hidden from his followers, lest the tidings should quench their ardour.

"'My wound is deep: I fain would sleep!
Take thou the vanguard of the three
And hide me in the bracken bush
That grows on yonder lily lea.
O bury me by the bracken bush,
Beneath the blumin' brier;
Let never living mortal ken
That a kindly Scot lies there!"

This deed was dune at the Otterburn
About the breaking of the day.
Earl Douglas was buried by the bracken bush
And Percy led captive away.'

The Trotters claim connection, too, with the Dukes of Athole, though themselves always commoners, the untitled lairds of Morton Hall in Midlothian and Charter Hall in Berwickshire. 'Jock' was entered to hounds by the late Lord Wemyss, father of the present Earl, best known, at any rate among riflemen, as Lord Elcho. From Harrow the future Master of the Meath went into the army and was gazetted as a cornet to the 5th Dragoon Guards, with whom he soldiered and hunted for seven years in England and Ireland. But the love of hunting was far stronger than the love of soldiering, and, after experiencing the joys of the Chase in Meath, which he always maintained to be the finest hunting country in the world, he settled down there in a comfortable hunting-box at Brownstown. For two years he hunted there, and then, on the retirement of Mr Waller in 1877, the Committee paid him the high honour of asking him to undertake the duties of Master.

They knew him to be a hard rider, with an exceptional knowledge both of hounds and horses. They knew, too, that though a 'foreigner' he was devoted to the interests of the Hunt, and popular with all its members. But they did not yet know, and perhaps 'Jock' himself hardly knew, that he possessed every quality of an ideal Master of Hounds.

It was with some reluctance that Mr Trotter accepted the post. Having once, however, put his hand to the plough he never looked back, but went straight on to the discharge of his duties with an energy and zeal that won general admiration. Where 'Jock' Trotter was, there could be no discord, for his unfailing good-temper and perfect courtesy charmed all hearts, whilst his firmness, always judiciously exercised, kept every one in his place. His knowledge of men, his keen insight into the nature and consideration for the feelings of the Irish peasantry, enabled him to avoid many unpleasantnesses and overcome many difficulties which would have proved fatal to the rule of a less tactful and diplomatic ruler. His vigorous health and grand physique, too, enabled him to bear without fatigue the exertion of hunting that 'country of magnificent distances.'

In 1879, the Meath hounds were honoured by the first visit of the Empress of Austria, who was so delighted with her reception and the sport shown her, that she repeated her visit in the following year. She was immensely popular. Bonfires blazed in her honour. The Press sent special reporters to chronicle her doings, and yet, with it all, there was no unseemly mobbing. The freedom from restraint, the absence of all the pomp, and pageantry, and ceremony, which had bored her to death in the English Shires was delightful to her, and she always declared that her happiest hunting days were spent in Ireland with the Meath, where men and women yet remember with admiration how she sailed like a bird over those glorious grass lands in the wake of her gallant pilot, 'Bay' Middleton.

Since the foregoing passage was written, and whilst these pages are going to press, the news of the Empress's assassination has fallen like a thunderbolt on society. And none, outside her own country, have felt the blow more keenly than her many Irish friends who loved her as much for her winsome ways as they admired her for her beauty and daring. Some, who did not appreciate the finished art of her riding, thought she was a reckless horsewoman. 'She was never that,' writes one who has often seen her ride to hounds. 'Nor have I seen any trace of jealousy in her style of riding when other women were going well to the front. It would have been strange in one of her sex, conscious of being well mounted and in all respects equipped for successful rivalry, if she had not tried to be with them, but I always thought in such moments that she rode with more judgment and a quieter determination than when, carried away by enthusiasm, she led a whole field.'

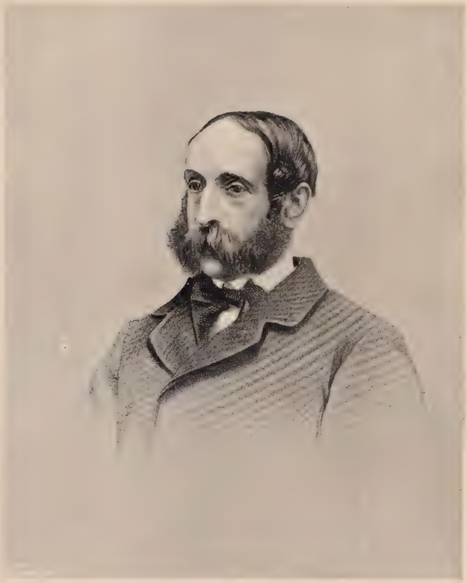
The Empress's love of horses was remarkable. She visited the stables every day to see that her hunters were comfortable, and gave each of them a carrot from a basket carried by one of her servants. When the famous hunter 'Domino' was disabled by an accident in the Irish hunting-field in 1880, the Empress tended him herself, fed him with her own hand, and was present at every consultation of the veterinary surgeons.

Mr Trotter began his Mastership with Frank Goodall as his huntsman, and a warm welcome Frank received for the sake of his father, whom old members of the Meath declared to have been the best man to hounds ever seen in Ireland. The horsemanship of the son was not considered by these keen critics quite equal to that of the sire, but though they swore by old Stephen Goodall's horsemanship as matchless, they admitted that in management of hounds Frank was little, if at all, his inferior. At any rate, Goodall was popular, and great regret was expressed when he left the Meath to carry the horn under Sir Watkin Wynn. Jack Prees succeeded him, and remained with the Meath during the whole of Mr Trotter's Mastership, which lasted till 1888.

That was, indeed, a black year for the Meath—for they lost their popular Master, and it looked as if they would lose all their hounds as well. A financial crash was the main cause of Mr Trotter's resignation, for his own income had become so reduced by agricultural depression in Scotland that he could not afford to hunt the country without a larger subscription, and this was not forthcoming. Then on top of this came the epidemic of dumb-madness in the kennels, which necessitated the destruction of the whole dog-pack, so that the Hunt committee found itself in the melancholy predicament of having no cash, no master, and no hounds. The

Earl of Fingal, however, came gallantly to the rescue, and hunted the country from Killeen Castle. But unfortunately some of the landowners who were prominent members of the Hunt had rendered themselves obnoxious to the farmers, and the latter openly declared that they would lay poison on their lands if certain persons named continued to hunt with the Meath hounds. There is no need to dwell upon that dark time. It has passed, and it is to be hoped that the ill-feeling, which was then provoked, has also passed never to be revived. Under the present Master, Mr John Watson, the Meath hounds maintain their old renown.

But never again will 'Jock' Trotter hunt with them, or with any hounds on this side the Styx. For in February last, but two months after his marriage to Miss Fenwick of Hillmorton, 'Jock' Trotter went over to the majority. It was his passion for hunting that killed him. A year or two ago, Lord Dudley made him field-master of the Worcester hounds. At the commencement of 1898, he had a bad attack of influenza, but, as soon as he was able to get out of bed, he insisted on going out with the hounds, though he was warned that it was madness for any one in his weak state to venture out of doors. The consequences were what might have been expected. The influenza attacked him more severely than ever, pneumonia followed, and a few days later he was dead. In every hunting circle in England his loss was deplored, for he was as gallant and knightly a gentleman as ever breathed, but nowhere was he more sincerely mourned than among the warm-hearted fox-hunters of Meath, where he was beloved as no Master of Hounds had ever been before.



G J Whyte Melville

MAJOR WHYTE-MELVILLE.

AMONGST the men of letters who have figured in the hunting-field and celebrated with their pens the glories of the Chase, I think the highest place must be assigned to Whyte-Melville. He never, indeed, wrote anything comparable to that beautiful prose-poem, 'My Winter Garden,' in which Charles Kingsley has given us the most glowing rhapsody ever penned on the Fox and his Hunters. But then Kingsley, though he loved the sport, was too conscientious a pastor to let it interfere with his higher duties and therefore with noble self-sacrifice renounced it, whilst Whyte-Melville was an enthusiastic foxhunter all his life. Anthony Trollope, again, was a keen hunting-man, but his knowledge of the Chase was superficial and his descriptions are never convincing, they are too palpably mere *tours de force*, whereas Whyte-Melville writes of hunting like one to the manner born. You feel that, as the Yankees say, he 'has been there.' In humorous delineation of character and in boisterous appreciation of the funny side of hunting, the author of 'Digby Grand' and 'Market Harborough' cannot, of course, stand a moment's comparison with the creator of the immortal 'Jorrocks.' But then Mr Surtees could not have written 'Holmby House,' 'The Interpreter,' and 'The Gladiators.' There is an aroma of distinction about Whyte-Melville's style which, coupled with his versatility, lifts him above the level of all other literary sportsmen. And his name is so inseparably associated with hunting that he has a peculiar claim to appear in any collection of biographies like the present.

George John Whyte-Melville was born in 1821, and came of good sporting Scottish stock. His father, a noted golfer and reel dancer, was for seventeen years Master of the Fife, and George was early entered to hounds by that renowned huntsman John Walker (the hunting sponsor of Colonel Anstruther Thomson), who afterwards went to Sir Watkin Wynn. From Eton, under the stern discipline of Keate, he passed into the 93rd Highlanders, out of which regiment he exchanged into the Coldstream Guards, and, after nine years' service in the army, retired in 1848 with the rank of Major. When the Russian war broke out, however, he rejoined the service, and was appointed a Lieutenant-colonel of Irregular Turkish Cavalry. His experiences in that capacity he embodied in 'The Interpreter,' to my thinking, one of the most interesting of his novels. On the declaration of peace he retired once more into private life and devoted himself entirely to hunting and literature.

Having married the second daughter of Lord Bateman, of Kelmarsh Hall, Major Whyte-Melville settled at Boughton, about three miles from the Pytchley kennels, and for many seasons hunted regularly with that famous pack. Boughton, it will be remembered, figures largely in 'Holmby House,' the most popular, perhaps, of all his novels. 'Tilbury Nogo' was his first venture in authorship, but it is from the appearance of 'Digby Grand' that his reputation dates. Here he had scope for displaying his knowledge both of town and country life, and his pictures of both are as faithful as they are graphic. As one reads now his description of the amusements of a man-about-town in the forties, one is struck with the atmosphere of sordidness and squalor which surrounded the sports (save the mark!) of the racketty 'Upper Ten' in those days. A sparring match at Jem Burn's, a ratting match at Billy Shaw's! What a tap-room odour there is about them! How dirty and disreputable were the places they frequented, and the people with whom they consorted, these 'swells,' in pursuit of the recreations of the 'Fancy!' And yet I will not be priggish enough to deny that there was a fascination about these unconventional pastimes; for I, too, have 'heard the chimes at midnight,' and have shaken the grimy paws of bruisers and dog fanciers in low-browed tavern parlours, and sat cheek-by-jowl with Bohemian blackguards of all sorts and imagined that I was 'seeing life' and enjoying it. But who will deny that the National Sporting Club is an improvement upon Jem Burn's sparring saloon and Billy Shaw's rat-pit? The racy humours of the old 'sporting crib,' with its varied assortment of humanity in the rough, may be lacking, but at least the surroundings are cleanlier, brighter, more comfortable, less revolting to a gentleman's sense of self-respect. The sports of a man about town are no longer redolent of blackguardism. Whyte-Melville, with all his refined taste and sensitive gentlemanly instincts, sounded the whole gamut of 'Life in London,' and summed up his experiences in the pithy exclamation, 'What damned fools men are!'

What a relief it must have been to him to get away from that fetid atmosphere into the pure, healthy air of country sport! His love of hunting was a passion, and as a hunting man he was most catholic in his tastes, equally at home in the Shires, with the wild deer on Exmoor, with Lord Wolverton's blood-hounds or with the Baron's in the Vale of Aylesbury. That he loved foxhunting best is unquestionable, though in one of the most spirited of his hunting songs he says:—

> 'Oh! the harrier makes a music that's sweet to the ear,
> And the note of the foxhound rings home to the brain;
> But the sport we love best is a spin with the deer
> O'er the pick of the pasture, the pride of the plain;
> Where the men of the hunt and the men of the sword
> Are at work with their spurs to ride up to the Ward.'

But that is the license of the poet, and, besides, there were the *beaux yeux* of Mrs J. L. Morrogh, the wife of the Master of the Ward Union, boldest and most graceful of horsewomen, to kindle the bard's inspiration and spur his fancy.

With the Pytchley he was known as a good goer, who preferred taking a line of his own. There was nothing dashing or showy about his riding, but he had the true sportsman's temper, fine hands, and perfect sympathy with the horse he rode. He abhorred dirt, and the notion that to be in the first flight meant constant falls and coming home coated with mud had no support from him. He thought it the most convincing proof of good riding to hounds to avoid falls and preserve the spotless neatness of his get-up as far as possible unspoiled. Yet, though seldom indulging in expensive mounts, it was rarely indeed that he failed to hold his own in any country. His gentle and equable temper was seldom roused, but there was one abomination which never failed to excite his wrath, and that was Wire.

His fierce ode ' 'Ware Wire! a Protest,' breathes a hatred which finds vent in such lines as these,—

> 'And bitter the curses you launch in your ire,
> At the villain who fenced his enclosure with wire.'

Doubtless many such curses came from the lips of the gentle Whyte-Melville, and who shall blame him?

'Whilst penning that ode,' says Mr Nethercote, 'his feelings probably were of much the same sort as those of the woman who, having brought a male neighbour before the magistrates on a charge of assault, on failing in her case addressed her enemy thus: "I'm a Christian woman, and so bear no malice; but if any one were to tell me that you had got a wasp's nest inside your breeches, I should be very glad to hear it." If only the *lex talionis* could be in force for one year, that is just the punishment which I would willingly assist in meting out to the unfeeling dastardly brutes who use wire, and especially barbed wire, for fences in a hunting country. Wasps' nests would be at a premium for *that* year.

When his private means were largely increased by a fortune bequeathed to him, Major Whyte-Melville left the little Northamptonshire village in which he had sojourned so long, and exchanged the modest *ménage* of Melville House for a more imposing establishment at Wootton Hall, but he still hunted with the Pytchley till he finally took a house in London, and the Shires knew him no more. Thenceforward his hunting was confined to two or three days a week with Mr Selby Lowndes' or the Baron's. His chief friend and companion on these sporting excursions was the Hon. Bob Grimston, of whom my old friend Frederick Gale has written so admirable a biography, and whom Ruskin, who was his contemporary at Christ Church, Oxford, described as 'a man of gentle birth and amiable manners, and of herculean strength, whose love of dogs and horses, and especially of boxing, was stupendous.'

On the marriage of his daughter and only child he again moved into the country and took a place near Tetbury in Gloucestershire. His last appearance in the hunting-field was with the Vale of White House on the 5th of December 1878. Whilst riding across a ploughed field, not far from Malmesbury, his horse stumbled and fell. Whyte-Melville was thrown with great violence on his head, and dislocated his neck. Death was almost instantaneous. The consternation and grief which the accident produced were indescribable. The hounds were at once stopped and taken home, and the next meet was cancelled. There was not a hunting country in the three kingdoms in which the melancholy news did not create profound sensation. Indeed, wherever there were English-speaking sportsmen all over the world, the tidings of Whyte-Melville's sudden and tragic death came with a shock of mingled surprise and sorrow. Pytchley men, in particular, recalled with tender regret the days which the soldier, sportsman, poet and novelist had spent amongst them. Was there ever, they asked one another, a cheerier companion to or from covert? Was there ever a more delightful *raconteur*, a more stirring reciter of thrilling songs of the Chase? Was there ever one of whom it could be more justly said that

'He bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman?'

To each and all of these questions there was but one sad answer—'Never.'

And it was not only in the hunting-field that Whyte-Melville had made fast friends. His charity and benevolence had won the hearts of the poor. At a time when for every novel he wrote he received £1500 down, it was his rule never to spend upon himself a farthing of the money earned by his pen. His income from this source was entirely devoted to charitable objects. Among many munificent gifts his last was that of a 'Working Man's Club and Reading Room' to Northampton, now known as 'The Melville Institute,' which he not only erected and supplied with books and papers at his own cost, but to the endowment of which he contributed a sum of £500.

For a man who hunted so regularly Whyte-Melville had singularly few falls. In January 1867, he, for the first time in twenty years, met with a bad accident, caused, as he said, 'by riding a young horse as if he were an old one.' His right arm was broken, and he was kept out of the hunting-field for several weeks. But he had no other mishap of any consequence until the fatal fall which ended his life, and that, strange to say, occurred, not in the course of a run, but whilst he was quietly trotting from one covert to another.

He was a man of striking appearance, slight of frame, but well knit, and a gentleman all over, from the white hat with black band to the natty boots. His face generally wore a thoughtful and almost sad expression. But it lighted up in society, and there were few brighter and better talkers, few more ready at repartee than he. He had humour, too, as the following anecdote shows. When he was introduced to Miss Strickland, the well-known authoress of 'The Queens of England' as the author of 'Holmby House,' a novel of which everyone was talking, that austere lady's first remark to him was as staggering as it was unexpected. 'Did your publisher find the work pay?' There was a twinkle in Whyte-Melville's eyes which belied the solemnity of his face and voice as he replied, 'Alas! madam, he dates the commencement of his ruin from the hour that he undertook my unfortunate novel.'

Of his hunting novels I think 'Market Harborough, or How Mr Sawyer went to the Shires' is the best. Indeed, Anthony Trollope thought it the best hunting novel ever written. But there are admirable pictures of scenes in the hunting-field in 'Digby Grand,' the 'Brookes of Bridlemere' and 'Katerfelto.' 'The Run of the Season' in 'Digby Grand,' and 'The Duke's Run' in the 'Brookes of Bridlemere,' may challenge comparison with 'Nimrod's' famous description of a day with the Quorn in dash and go, whilst they are certainly superior from a purely literary point of view.

I am inclined to think that Whyte-Melville touched his high-water mark as a writer in the first part of 'Cérise,' which, though a most unequal book, contains some of his best work. 'The Gladiators' is, no doubt, the finest of his tales, in so far as sustained power and interest are concerned. That and 'Holmby House' will probably be read long after his other novels are forgotten, for their subjects are of perennial interest, whilst pictures of the life and manners of fifty years ago, however true and graphic, take little hold on the public of to-day.

Doubtless many of his hunting-songs will live, though I will hardly go so far as one of his admirers, who says: 'As the poet-laureate of the hunting-field he stands alone. His songs will not be forgotten or unsung so long as there is a pack of hounds in England.' The best hunting-songs, like the best hymns, are not remarkable for literary merit. In fact, if they lapse into poetry they lose half their charm and force. There is not much poetry in Whyte-Melville's 'The Galloping Squire,' 'A Rum one to follow, a Bad one to beat,' 'The Clipper that stands in the stall at the top,' but they have a swing and rush which makes them capital hunting-songs, and the most brilliant of poets could not have better hit off to a hunting man's taste the picture of a perfect hunter than the author of these lines:

'A head like a snake, and a skin like a mouse,
An eye like a woman, bright, gentle and brown,
With loins and a back that would carry a house,
And quarters to lift him smack over a town!
What's a leap to the rest, is to him but a hop,
The clipper that stands in the stall at the top.'

But Campbell of Saddell, Egerton Warburton, and Charles Buxton have all written songs which are not unworthy of comparison with Whyte-Melville's best, and there are two of Kingsley's which have never been surpassed for spirit and melody.

Both the prose and verse of Whyte-Melville are marked by that scholarly style which was the outcome of the old-fashioned classical education of the great public schools of England and which you can trace with equal distinctness in the novels of his contemporary, George Alfred Lawrence whose 'Sans Merci,' 'Sword and Gown,' and 'Brakespeare,' whatever their faults may be, are admirably written. It was a style that was apt at times to slip into ponderosity, but there is a fluency and rhythm about it which one misses in the work of the latter day novelist.

THE EARLS OF LONSDALE.

Cedant arma togæ might well stand as the motto of the Lowthers, for, unlike most of the great feudal houses of England, they owe their wealth and power entirely to success in civil life. They have produced some eminent lawyers, and some useful State servants, but no illustrious soldier or sailor. In fact, they belong to the nobility of the robe, not of the sword.

There have been Lowthers in Westmoreland, to use the old legal phrase, 'from time whereof the memory of man runneth not to the contrary.' As far back as the reign of Henry the Second, within a hundred years of the Conquest, the name of William de Lowther appears as head of the gentry of the shire. But the real founder of the fame and fortunes of the family was a lawyer,—Sir Hugh de Lowther, Attorney-General under Edward the First. He represented his county in the Parliament which met in 1299, and from that time to this, a period of 600 years, there has never sat a Parliament without a Lowther or a Lowther's nominee amongst its members. The grandson of the Attorney-General followed Harry the Fifth to the wars, under the banner of his over-lord, the Earl of Westmorland, and was one of 'the few, the happy few, the band of brothers,' whose valour won the

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glorious battle of Agincourt. Two generations later, the house of Lowther became allied with that of Clifford, through the marriage of the grandson of the Agincourt hero with the half-sister of the 'Good Lord Clifford' who had been brought up as a shepherd by his mother to save him from the vengeance of the Yorkists. After thirty years of that humble Arcadian life, he was restored to his birthright and estates by Henry the Seventh, a romantic incident which Wordsworth has celebrated in the beautiful 'Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle upon the Restoration of Lord Clifford.'

The Lowthers have ever been an honourable race, and their conscientious sense of honour has more than once stood in the way of their political advancement. Sir Richard Lowther, Warden of the West Marches, and High Sheriff of Cumberland, when despatched by Queen Bess to escort Mary Stuart to Carlisle Castle after her crushing defeat at Langside, thought it inconsistent with the honour of a Lowther to treat as a prisoner the hapless Queen who had thrown herself on the promised protection of a sister-sovereign. Whereat 'good Queen Bess,' who was herself absolutely destitute of any sense of honour, was so wroth, that ever after Sir Richard was in her black books. But it is pleasant to know that, unlike many of Elizabeth's disgraced and discarded servants, he died peacefully in his bed at a good old age, 'having kept up plentiful hospitality for fifty-seven years.' What better tribute to his worth than those words convey could any English country gentleman desire!

Few persons, I daresay, were aware when the Right Honourable James Lowther (whom sportsmen know as 'Jim') was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland in

1878, that it was not the first time a member of his family had held high office in that 'disthressful country.' One of the most eminent lawyers of his time was Gerard Lowther, who was Chief Justice, and afterwards Lord Chancellor of Ireland, under the Commonwealth; whilst yet another Lowther was, a little later, a Baron of the Irish Exchequer. It was the nephew of this Irish Lord Chancellor that purchased the lands of the dissolved monastery of St Bees for his second son Christopher, who first conceived the idea of mining for coal around Whitehaven, an idea which his son, Sir John Lowther, carried into execution, thereby adding enormously to the revenues of his descendants.

To this Sir John the house of Lowther owes its present position and wealth. It was his misfortune to have greatness thrust upon him. Knighted by Charles II, he was, nevertheless, too honest a supporter of free English institutions to kow-tow to James II, and he therefore cast in his lot with William of Orange. By the energetic and courageous use he made of his influence in Westmoreland and Cumberland he secured those counties to the Prince of Orange, and his bold action at this juncture took all the heart out of James's followers in the North. Macaulay says that he was 'a very cunning statesman, and a very honest country gentleman.' But his honesty was stronger than his cunning, and when he was forced into the position of First Lord of the Treasury in 1690, he proved utterly unfitted for the post, not from want of ability, but from want of complaisance. The Lowther sense of honour would not let him stoop to corruption and bribery. And his proud, sensitive nature could not brook the savage satire and abuse which his enemies hurled at him. Here is a specimen of the lampoons which galled him :—

'Rich in words as he is poor in sense,
An empty piece of misplaced eloquence,
With a soft voice and a moss-trooper's smile,
The widgeon fain the Commons would beguile.'

It must have been an enormous relief to him to escape at last from the distasteful and degrading surroundings of office to the congenial pleasures of his Westmoreland home. For, he was a better landscape gardener than statesman and found far more interest in art than in politics. He pulled down the old Lowther Hall, and built an elaborate mansion, the ceilings of which were painted by Verrio, whilst he himself designed the gardens, and planted the woods which made the place the wonder and pride of the North. To salve the sore left by his failure as the First Lord of the Treasury, he was created in 1696 Baron Lowther and Viscount Lonsdale, and thus raised the ancient line of Lowther to the peerage.

It is not given to many noble families to boast of ancestors who have earned the sobriquets of both 'the good lord' and 'the bad lord.' One of the two, many houses can proudly point to, but I think the Lowthers alone can claim both. The 'good lord' was Henry, the son of the first Viscount. Robert, Earl Nugent, the big, hearty, jovial Irish poet and politician, in whose praise as Lord Clare, Goldsmith wrote, 'The Haunch of Venison,' considered Henry, the second Viscount, 'the most perfect man he ever had the happiness and honour of being acquainted with,' and wrote a most eulogistic, and, if the truth must be told, somewhat fulsome epitaph as 'a tribute of affection and reverence to his dearest friend.' Even Horace Walpole, who was not greatly enamoured of goodness, describes him as 'a man of very conscientious and disinterested honour, though no great genius.'

But, whilst the 'good Lord Lowther' is forgotten, tradition still preserves many stories of the 'bad earl,' for it is a lamentable fact that the world usually takes more interest in bad than in good men. Sir James Lowther, Baronet, afterwards first Earl of Lonsdale, was a feudal baron of the old mediæval type, haughty, imperious, tyrannical. None durst withstand his will. Those who had the hardihood to do so suffered for it. One Whitehaven tradesman, who showed an Englishman's stubborn resistance to tyranny, was, by the 'bad earl's' orders, kidnapped by a press-gang, and did not set foot on English soil again for ten years. James Lowther would fight any man on the slightest possible provocation. That he was a dare-devil fire-eater is indisputable, and perhaps that was the least discreditable feature of his character. He held no less than nine parliamentary seats absolutely at his disposal. One of his nominees was young William Pitt, then just one and twenty years of age, who in a letter to his mother thus refers to the offer of a seat made him by Lord Lonsdale. 'Appleby is the place I am to represent, and the election will be made (probably in a week or ten days) without my having any trouble or even visiting my constituents.'

But the hereditary 'goodness' of the Lowthers cropped up again in William the second Earl (or, strictly speaking, the first Earl of the second creation, for the 'bad Earl's' title died with him), the intimate friend of Wordsworth, who dedicated to him 'The Excursion' and sang his praises in more than one sonnet. It is not, however, for his political or social virtues that the second Earl of Lonsdale will be remembered, but as the builder of Lowther Castle, the most imposing of all 'the stately homes of England.' It was here that the present Earl entertained the Emperor of Germany in princely state two years ago, and His Imperial Majesty has left it on record how profoundly he was impressed by the feudal grandeur of the place and its surroundings. Built, in the fourteenth-century style, of rose-tinted white stone, Lowther Castle forms a most picturesque and striking object from whatever side you approach it. The arched gateways, the high embattled walls, the massive towers, the spacious courts, have a dignity and distinction which one seldom finds in imitations of the antique. The noble turreted north front, 420 feet in length, is unsurpassed by anything now left in England. And it would be hard to match the glorious view of Penrith Beacon-Hill, Saddleback and the distant mountains of Scotland that meets the eye from the great terrace, nearly a mile in length, which runs along the edge of a deep limestone cliff overlooking the beautiful park, with its huge old forest trees and herds of fallow deer. Well might Wordsworth apostrophise it thus:—

'Lowther! in thy majestic Pile are seen
   Cathedral pomp and grace, in apt accord
With the baronial castle's sterner mien;
   Union significant of God adored
And charters won and guarded by the sword
Of ancient honour.'

The mansion erected by the first Viscount Lonsdale in 1685 was deemed a wonder of elegance, but one can hardly regret that it was burned to the ground in 1720, seeing that, but for this mishap, there would probably never have arisen the Lowther Castle which is the pride of Cumberland and Westmoreland to-day.

But the second earl has a still greater claim upon those who read these pages, for he introduced a new feature into the house of Lowther. Hitherto there had been among them lawyers, statesmen, virtuosi, but no sportsman. The second earl supplied that defect. As Sir William Lowther he hunted the Cottesmore country from 1788 to 1802, and was celebrated for the strength and size of his hounds. Sir Gilbert Heathcote succeeded him, Lambert carrying the horn, and the well-known Leicestershire rough-rider, Dick Christian, immortalised by the 'Druid,' had care of the stud. When Sir Gilbert Heathcote resigned, Sir William Lowther, who had been created Earl of Lonsdale, again took the Cottesmore in hand, and hunted the country from 1806 to 1842, when he gave place to Sir Richard Sutton. Lord Lonsdale was a contemporary of Meynell, but never would breed from his blood. He persisted in keeping the large, slow-hunting hounds to which he had always been accustomed, and a good fox over the country was 'above his hands.'

The third earl, who succeeded his father in 1844, also possessed somewhat similar tastes in this respect. He was an ardent lover of sport, and has left his name imperishably stamped on the records of the Turf by the victory of his horse Spaniel in the Derby of 1831. He was, moreover, like some of his successors, a liberal patron of Music and the Drama, and paid large subsidies for the maintenance of Italian Opera in London. There was something of the virtuoso in him, too, and his craze for collecting rare porcelain was a god-send to the dealers in such wares. Apart from that, he was a man of sound common sense and considerable ability. His tenants found him a generous landlord. He spent vast sums in the drainage of his estates, was one of the first and staunchest supporters of John Loudon Macadam, the great revolutioniser of roads, and was Chairman of the Metropolitan Roads Committee. Benjamin Disraeli took him as the original of Lord Eskdale in *Tancred*, but I think the brilliant novelist was hardly just to the prototype of his fictitious character when he described him as 'a man with every ability except the ability to make his powers useful to mankind.'

The third earl never married, and when he died in 1872 the title passed to his nephew, Henry Lowther, whose father, Colonel Henry Cecil Lowther, served with distinction in the Peninsular War, under both Sir John Moore and the Great Duke. During the terrible retreat to Corunna, Colonel Lowther, then in the 7th Hussars, was with the guard protecting the rear of the army, and for sixteen days was exposed to the ceaseless sleet and snow and icy winds of an exceptionally bitter winter, without any better shelter day or night than the lee-side of a rock. On another occasion he proved his powers of endurance by riding eighty miles with despatches over a rugged and practically roadless country, without change or rest from start to finish. On his retirement from the army Colonel Lowther obtained some notoriety as a politician, and represented the Lowther interest in Parliament. Sir James Graham once described him as 'a genuine old Tory of the long-horned kind.' He never, I believe, opened his mouth in the House of Commons except to say 'Hear, hear' in support of the orators of his party, but one brief and pithy speech of his outside the House has been recorded. After his victory over Henry Brougham at the election of 1832, the latter, on learning the result of the polling, made an impassioned oration from the hustings. When he had finished, the successful Colonel had *his* say, and what he said was this: 'I point, gentlemen, to the poll.' That was all, but it was enough, and the roar of cheers which greeted him showed that the speech was as telling as it was laconic.

Henry, the son of the Peninsular veteran, also commenced his career as a soldier, and served in the Life Guards from 1837 to 1852, when he retired as Captain, but subsequently attained the honorary rank of Colonel. He was a fine sportsman and a devoted lover of hunting. In 1870, whilst still Colonel Lowther, he followed in the footsteps of his grandfather, and became Master of the Cottesmore in succession to Sir John Trollope, who had hunted the country for sixteen seasons. When his uncle, the old earl, died in 1872 at the age of eighty-four, and Colonel Lowther succeeded to the title and estates, he still retained the Mastership of the Cottesmore, which he continued to hold till his death in 1876. For the two following years his eldest son and successor, St George Henry Lowther, was also Master of the Cottesmore, but resigned the horn to Lord Carrington in 1878.

On the brief and melancholy career of the fourth earl, who died in 1882 at the early age of twenty-six, there is no need to dwell. And I come now to his brother and successor, Hugh Cecil Lowther, fifth Earl of Lonsdale, the most brilliant sportsman that his ancient line has yet produced. Born in 1857, he was educated at Eton, where he was good at all athletic games. As a steeplechaser, hurdle-racer, and sprinter he had few equals among his schoolmates, and at cricket he was the fastest bowler among his contemporaries. Had his precision been equal to his pace he would have been a very formidable trundler. Long before his Eton days, however, he had been initiated into the delights of hunting. He has been heard to say that he hunted 'on his own hook' on his pony when he was but five years of age, but he was first really entered to hounds as a young man with the Quorn, of which he has since been Master. In 1876, like his subsequent rival the Earl of Shrewsbury, he became a cab proprietor, and his dark blue hansoms, picked out with yellow, built by Forder of Wolverhampton, were a familiar feature of the London streets. In 1878 he married the Lady Grace Gordon, sister of the present Marquis of Huntly. In the same year he won the 'longest race in England,' the Rutland Welter Draghunt Cup at Newmarket, riding his own mare, The Queen. A Hunter's Hurdle Race at Carlisle also fell to him that year, but, finding that he was putting on weight, he gave up steeplechasing and devoted his horsemanship entirely to hunting.

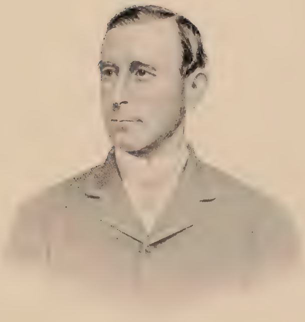
In 1880 he went with his wife on a sporting tour to North America, and roughed it manfully in the Rockies, where his bag of big game included thirty bears, and a rare lot of bison, mountain sheep and deer.

On his return he offered to hunt the Pytchley woodland pack. The offer was accepted, and he did the thing in a style of the most lavish magnificence. No expense was spared on the kennels or stables. No hunt servants in the three kingdoms were so splendidly mounted as his, and he himself rode superb horses, more fit for the pastures of Leicestershire than the Pytchley woodlands. A fine, fearless, powerful rider, he frequently put the jumping powers of his costly cattle to a severe test over thick heavy fences between the woods, flying posts and rails in a way that would have gladdened the heart of old Dick Christian. But it was not only in the field that Lord Lonsdale displayed his ardour for the chase. He personally superintended the management of his kennels, and was there every morning at seven o'clock to see the hounds fed. At one time he had an extraordinary mania for chestnuts, there being no less than seventy of that colour in his stables at once, and the fine team he used to drive in the eighties will be remembered by all lovers of coaching.

In 1885 Lord Lonsdale took the Mastership of the Quorn, which he held till the close of last season, and the country has been hunted by him in a style worthy of its splendid traditions. Whilst, not less conspicuous in the field than her husband has been the Countess, a fine horsewoman, with a wonderfully quick eye to hounds and probably unequalled in hound-lore by any woman in the three kingdoms.

The veteran, Tom Firr, of whom I have written elsewhere, oldest and greatest of living huntsmen, was with Lord Lonsdale from first to last, and, to quote the words of an old friend of mine who had many a good day's sport with the Quorn last season, is still 'full of vigour and dash and able to hold his own with the boldest horseman as in the old days when he rode the famous run from Waterloo gorse.'

Lord Lonsdale's exploits up in the Rockies and in the Arctic regions have proved that he is no feather-bed, stay-at-home sportsman. His feats of endurance have rivalled those of his grandfather, the gallant Peninsular soldier, and have shown that he is of that hardy English



TOM FIRR.

breed which has made our race foremost among the world's adventurers. Yet, great as is the credit which these deeds of derring-do reflect upon the Earl of Lonsdale, I think his fame in the sporting world will rest rather upon his remarkable achievement in his memorable match with the Earl of Shrewsbury. In the winter of 1891 there arose among a shooting-party at Ingestre, Lord Shrewbury's seat, a discussion on the relative merits of trotters and gallopers, in which Lord Lonsdale took a prominent part. The result was a match for a nominal £100 a-side between the two Earls, the conditions of which were as follows—to drive five miles four-in-hand, five miles double harness, five miles single harness, and ride five miles postillion. For reasons which it is unnecessary to dwell upon, the Earl of Shrewsbury backed out of the match at the last moment, but Lord Lonsdale, being on the appointed spot with his horses, resolved to go through with the undertaking, and did so on the 11th of March 1891. The best account of the performance is the following from *The Field*, by an eye-witness:—

'Though the match, by becoming a mere race against time, was shorn of much of its interest, yet a very large crowd was collected at Reigate, and much discussion ensued as to the time it was possible to do the twenty miles in. Another fall of snow had come down the previous night, but the plough had been early to work, and the whole length of the road was cleared. The course was a five-mile stretch of road between Reigate and Crawley. At twelve o'clock the sky cleared, the sun shone, and the four different teams filed out from under the archway of the White Hart. It would occupy too much space to give a description of each horse; suffice it to say that they all looked hard as nails, and fit to run for their lives. Lord Lonsdale had thought if it were worth doing at all, it was worth while doing well, and had taken the greatest trouble that nothing should be wanting to make a record that should occupy a niche in the temple of fame. As far as we, in our humble opinion, could judge, success had most deservedly crowned his efforts, and, look where he might, not a flaw or hitch could be seen in either horses, harness, vehicles or arrangements.

'Walking down the road with the easy swinging gait of the thoroughbred, is that speedy horse Warpaint, and he is harnessed to a racing waggon, lent by Mr Fox of New York. Next come a pair of American trotters, that have done a very respectable record ere they crossed the Atlantic; but we shall see to-day that they can gallop as well as trot. The machine that glides smoothly behind them is an ordinary road waggon, lent by the Marquis of Cholmondeley. Then, drawing a *char-à-banc*, the four-in-hand trot jauntily by; blood-like leaders and wheelers that look capable of carrying 14 stone in the front rank to hounds. Last of all comes a hog-maned, hunter-like chestnut, carrying the postillion's saddle, and alongside of him is a brown mare which, we understand, is Violetta, an animal that was lately racing in France; they are drawing a buggy that was specially made for the purpose by the Henney Company of Illinois.

'But we must hurry to the scene of operations, or we shall miss some of the fun. A three-mile drive brings us to where a crowd of people are standing about in the snow and the slush, with an air of eager expectancy written on their faces. On each side of the road two little blue and yellow flags flutter gaily in the breeze, and denote that this is the starting-point, as it is also the finishing one. Our drag is drawn up in an adjoining gateway, and a clump of Scotch pines shelters us from the wind. A mile or more of brown road, hemmed in on each side by the white snow, stretches away up the hill, and disappears beyond the brow. Some preliminaries have to be gone through ; two of the teams have to reach the further end of the course, and the road has to be cleared ; a more good-humoured crowd could not be imagined—lots of chaff, never a solitary policeman to be seen, and never a moment when one is wanted.

'At last everything is in readiness ; we assemble round the time-keeper ; there is a cry of "He's off!" and we see Lord Lonsdale, in blue spectacles, dash by in his "one horse shay." It seems but another second, and old Warpaint settling down in his stride is disappearing over the distant hill. He is out of sight, and now we have twenty minutes to wait before he will appear again, which time is not ill spent alongside of the refreshment hamper. A day or two ago very few people believed it possible to do the twenty miles under the hour, but the business-like way in which everything is arranged seems to have altered that opinion, and we cannot get even a modest sovereign on the event. Watches are consulted, until in a few minutes more we may expect the returning sportsman to appear in sight. Yonder he comes over the brow of the hill. Nearer and nearer come the flying team, scattering with their heels the dirt that forms a halo round the carriage. There is a cry of "Clear the course!" a rush to take up positions, and the next second the pair of mares flash by. The mud-bespattered nobleman urges them on till the post is passed, and then with a "whoa" and a pull at the reins, he has arrested the full tide of their career sufficiently to drop to the ground, and climb the *char-à-banc.*

'The four horses are well into their collars, and the wheels are spinning round. His lordship has scrambled to the box, and now, approaching the flags, he seizes the ribbons, and shaking himself into his seat is at it again. Enthusiasm and excitement rise to the highest pitch as we watch each horse laying himself out to do his work, all level as a die, and every trace taut. It is a heavy vehicle, but those horses make nothing of it, and the whole thing is soon beyond our ken. We have another twenty minutes to wait, but we see now that, bar accidents, extraordinarily good time will be made, and we anxiously watch for the return. Men who had taken up positions along the road are now mustering in great force at the winning-post. A current of feverish expectancy shows itself in a low murmur; but it has nothing to do with betting, for hardly any one here has a farthing on, but it is the genuine interest which the British public always feel in witnessing an extraordinary feat by a thoroughly honest sportsman.

'Now the horses' heads are in sight—they are racing down the hill. The postillion earl is sitting in the saddle and sending them along at the very top of their speed. Every one gets as near to the post as he can, and in the excitement of the moment is heedless that he stands half up to the knees in snow. Clear the road! The horses seem to fly, and in another second they sweep past the post. Up go hats and caps, real hearty British yells rend the air, and the race is over.

'The twenty miles were done in 55 min. 30 sec. This is a record that will not be easily lowered. As far as

Lord Lonsdale was concerned, he had done everything that human foresight could imagine. Both himself and his horses were trained to the hour, and we may say that neither was in the least degree tired or blown by their very severe exertions. Harness and carriages combined lightness and strength, and after the race was over, when it is always easy to criticise and find fault, it was impossible to see what more could have been done to have made better time. The roads after the snow were decidedly woolly, and in places the wheels cut deep ; this would, of course, affect time. Then half a minute was lost by a horseman being unable to pull his horse out of the road, and quite as much when an over-zealous policeman wanted to interfere. The feat will go down to posterity as one of the finest performances in the history of sport.'

This was the crowning achievement of Lord Lonsdale's sporting career, and, to my thinking, it stamps him as a true sportsman of the good old English type, a worthy successor of George Osbaldeston and Thomas Assheton Smith.

As Master of the Quorn, Lord Lonsdale's thirteen years' reign has been a brilliant one, and for many a long day men will speak with admiration of the famous Barkby Holt Run on December 14, 1894, when the bitch pack, flying close and swift as pigeons, ran their fox, a rare stout goer, for two hours and five minutes, covering twenty-seven miles from point to point, and were almost at his brush when he got to ground in a rabbit-hole. But the most remarkable feature of the run was that the Master and all the hunt-servants were up at the finish, each having ridden every yard with the hounds—an incident which, considering the clinking pace, is, I imagine, unparelleled in the annals of fox-hunting.

MASTERS OF THE DEVON AND SOMERSET.

THOSE who can appreciate the poetry of sport will find nothing in the three kingdoms that can compare with hunting the wild red deer on Exmoor. But I suspect that in his heart of hearts the genuine fox-hunter, who, as a rule, is the reverse of romantic, will feel disappointed when he first tastes the sport of wild stag-hunting with the far-famed Devon and Somerset. For, there is an absence of that fierce excitement which makes a man's blood thrill as he gallops at break-neck pace after a stout fox over the level pastures and stiff bullfinches of the Shires. To the real lover of hunting as a craft, the chase of the wild stag will commend itself as almost the perfection of sport. But the hard rider who wants sensation, and wants it strong, will secretly vote the hunting methods of Exmoor slow and unexciting. I say *secretly*, for after the rhapsodies of Whyte-Melville and others upon the glories of chasing the red deer over his native wilds, no man will venture *openly* to disparage a sport which has been so eloquently eulogised in prose and verse by writers from whom it would be considered presumptuous to differ. I have spoken of the poetry of sport. If you would know wherein it consists, read this passage from my old friend and colleague the late James Nevill Fitt, who, though a staunch fox-hunter, had a vein of poetic feeling in him which no one would have guessed from his personal appearance.

'I shall never forget one kill I saw near Waters Meet. The stag had taken soil, and so steep was the path from the road above to the river below, that even the hardy Devon and Somerset men (who are by no means accustomed to stick at trifles in this way) dismounted, and leaving their horses, scrambled down, holding by boughs and twigs to help them in their descent. When the stream was reached, so closely did the boughs intertwine overhead, that a shade deeper than that of the nave of York Minster was produced. There stood the stag at bay, breast deep in the stream; behind him a waterfall, with its torrent like a sheet of silver; every stone, every boulder, moss-covered and dripping with moisture; in fact, a tiny waterfall of itself. Around him the baying pack, some swimming, others standing on rocks, while the leafy canopy overhead, aided by the mountain sides, made their melodious voices re-echo again and again. Some dozen men in scarlet, just serving to light up the scene, and throw in the colouring that made it perfect, were scattered round; and to him who had eyes to see, it seemed like a hunt in fairyland. That it was stern and real, the dead deer, a few minutes later, and the long ride home, proved; but to this day I have never realised how the death stroke was given. A strange feeling, such as Kingsley's friend Claude felt at the sight of the herd when "staring stupidly at them, trying in vain to take in the sight, with the strangest new excitement boiling up in my throat: and at the sound of their hoofs on the turf, I woke, and found the keeper staring, not at them, but at me, who, I verily believe, had something very like a tear in these excitable eyes of mine."

'No doubt you had, Claude. I felt very much the same when first that vision beneath the waterfall burst on my sight, or, rather, when I had time to drink in its full volume of beauty. As I have said, how that deer was killed I know not; sufficient is it that I saw him dragged to land, and "the hounds' fee" distributed. Here was one—nay, two pictures—comprised within the space of ten minutes, such as no artist ever painted, or ever will paint, not even Landseer himself.'

Who will say after reading that passage that there is no poetry in sport, or deny that the best place to find it is in the chase of the red deer over the combes and chines of Exmoor? And there alone must you seek the sport, for nowhere else is the wild stag hunted in Great Britain. How long stag-hunting has been practised on Exmoor it is impossible to tell—perhaps as far back as the Conqueror or before, for there must have been red deer there from time immemorial. The first authentic mention of hounds in the district is found in the reign of Elizabeth, when Hugh Pollard was appointed 'Ranger of the Royal Forest of Exmoor,' and kept a pack at Simonsbath.

When the 18th century dawned it found Mr Walter of Stevenstown in possession of the hounds, which, it is presumed, had been continued since Hugh Pollard's time. To him succeeded Lord Orford, and he was followed by Mr Dyke, who hunted the country, it is said, with great success for many years.

Sir Thomas Acland next took the hounds and hunted in princely style. The Hon. John Fortescue, in his excellent historical sketch of 'Stag-hunting on Exmoor,' quotes the following letter which gives a vivid picture of the sport as it was carried on under the Mastership of Sir Thomas Acland.

'DULVERTON, SOMERSET, *Sept.* 4, 1759.

'SIR,—I am ordered by my master, Courtenay Walrond, Esq., to trouble you with this letter, that you may have the pleasure of hearing of one of the finest stag hunts that ever happened in this kingdom. About one o'clock Monday morning, my master, with his brother and his steward, Mr Brutton, set out from Bradfield, bravely mounted, attended by several servants which had horses. About ten o'clock they got to the woods, and soon after roused a stag at the head of the Ironmill Water, where he took to Stuckeridge Wood and crossed the river Exe, from thence to Exe Cleeve, and after running over Exmoor Forest, on the whole more than seventy miles, he was killed near Lowry Gate, when he appeared to be about ten years old, his brow, bay and tree angles having all his rights, and seven on one top, and five on the other, and was, to one inch, fourteen hands high. This noble chase being ended, my master, his brother and Mr Brutton, with about twenty gentlemen more, waited on Sir Thomas Acland at Pixton, where each of them drank the health of the stag in a full quart glass of claret placed in the stag's mouth, and after drinking several proper healths, they went in good order to their respective beds at two o'clock, and dined with Sir Thomas next day on a haunch of this noble creature, and about fifty dishes of the greatest rarities, among which were, with several others, black grouse. Master, his brother and Mr Brutton rode extremely bold, and were in at the death of the stag. They set out for Bradfield to-morrow evening, and as Sir Thomas has given master one haunch which weights thirty-six pounds and a quarter, he desires you will dine with him on Thursday at Bradfield. I must now conclude, Sir Thomas having given notice of another stag equally good as this I have described, in Brockeridge Wood, for which place the gentlemen are now setting out, and I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

'J. RICH,

'**Park-Keeper to Courtenay Walrond, Esq.**'

'*P.S.*—You are desired to bring with you Mr Brutton, the hatter, and Mr Drake, a doctor of Exeter. You may invite likewise, if you please, any other friend of yours.

'There were at the Chase more than 500 horse and 1000 foot.'

They knew how to combine conviviality and sport, those fine old Devonshire gentlemen, and yet they kept their merriment apparently 'within the limit of becoming mirth,' if we may take the words 'went in good order to their respective beds' literally and not as a mere euphemism of Mr J. Rich's. The addition 'at two o'clock' sounds suspicious, I admit, for they must in that case have been hard at it for some eight or ten hours, and he must have been a strong-headed toper who could go to bed 'in good order' after such a bout. If one may judge from the graphic pictures of the orgies of fox-hunters, given by James Thomson in *The Seasons*, most of the convivialists on such occasions subsided on the floor. But perhaps stag-hunters were more decorous or could take their liquor better.

The Aclands, the Bassets, the Fortescues, were all in turn Masters of the Exmoor Stag-hounds, till in 1825 Mr Stucley Lucas of Baronstown, finding it hopeless to continue a sport which for years had been on the wane, sold his renowned pack of stag-hounds, the last of the true stag-hounds of England, and it seemed as if the chase of the wild deer on Exmoor had perished for ever. Fitful attempts were made to revive the sport, but poachers and deerstealers had almost exterminated the deer, whilst the erection of fences and plantations had spoiled the hunting-grounds. Then at last there came a gleam of hope, and how it came I will let the Hon. John Fortescue describe.

'The sporting community in the neighbourhood of Dulverton, having long felt that their country was not sufficiently hunted, and being possessed of an itching desire to have a pack of foxhounds which they could call *their own*, in the spring of 1855 Mr Froude Bellew (a nephew of the celebrated parson Froude) consented to start a pack for their edification. Mr Bellew had inherited from his uncle a beautiful and unequalled pack of harriers, which up to this time he had himself hunted, aided by the faithful Jack Babbage. The well-known yellow pied pack, however, being rather on the small side for fox-hunting, Mr Bellew in the month of May purchased the pack belonging to Mr Horlock, a well-known M.F.H., who was just giving up a subscription pack in Cornwall.

'This pack having arrived at Rhyll, Mr Bellew announced, on the 13th of May, that if the country ever again thought it desirable to have a pack of stag-hounds to hunt the wild deer, and any one would undertake the management, he would present them with his large draft.

'A start having been made towards raising a pack, the question was how that pack was to be kept up. A meeting was held on the 23rd to consider the subject, and finally, after a vast deal of talk without any substantial support being promised, Mr Fenwick Bisset undertook to hunt the country for one season, trusting entirely to the liberality of the country to supply him with requisite funds, without making any conditions as to amount of support, etc., and that, should the subscriptions fall short of the required sum, it should be entirely at his discretion to give up the stag-hounds at once. In fact, though there was great plausible support, and confident assurance that there would be ample support from those who had been supporters in former years, there were evidently misgivings as to what support the stag-hounds of this day might find; and, as it proved, those misgivings were not without foundation. Thus Mr Bisset, though but a novice, undertook the mastership, and thus were established the Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds.'

With John Babbage as huntsman, and Arthur Heal, who had only up to that time been entered to hare, as whip, Mr Fenwick Bisset started hunting the red deer of Exmoor on the 21st of August 1855. The first season was *not* encouraging. In twenty-five hunting days they only took three stags and two hinds, of which all but one stag were killed; and what with the hounds killing sheep, and the poachers killing deer, and the landowners holding aloof, the prospect looked black indeed. But Mr Bisset was a 'rare plucked 'un,' and he resolved to go on with dogged determination. The next season he hunted thirty days and killed seven deer, but two of these were 'unwarrantable' and the slaying of them was, therefore, a discredit to the Master's sportsmanship. The third season was distinctly reassuring, for they took eight stags, had many brilliant runs and only three blank days out of the thirty-three they hunted.

1858 established a record in the shape of a glorious run of twenty-two miles as the crow flies, in two hours and twenty minutes, without a check, and the sport was otherwise better than it had yet been. But the poachers still plied their nefarious game so actively and audaciously that deer were hard to find. Nevertheless Mr Bisset persevered with that dogged English obstinacy which refuses to recognise defeat.

In 1859 affairs arrived at a crisis that seemed to foreshadow the collapse of the sport which for four years, in the face of extraordinary difficulties, Mr Bisset had so gallantly striven to establish. There were no funds forthcoming, the Master's tenancy of Pixton expired, and he announced his intention of leaving the country and giving up the hounds. But Mr Froude Bellew and the Honourable Mark Rolle came to the rescue with handsome donations and the promise of liberal annual subscriptions; other landowners followed suit, Mr Bisset found fresh quarters at Exford, and the season of 1859, which had opened so gloomily, ended with the brightest of prospects.

From that day difficulties vanished, and a golden era set in for the Devon and Somerset. To show how marked was the change which came over the fortunes of the Hunt, I need only contrast the records of sport in 1870 with that in the early days of Mr Bisset's Mastership. In that year they took, in thirty-six hunting-days, twenty-two stags, and eight hinds, of which all but two hinds were killed. It was in this year, too, that the grateful sportsmen of Devon and Somerset, 430 in number, subscribed £757 towards a testimonial to Mr Bisset, in recognition of the pluck and perseverance and unselfish devotion he had displayed during the fifteen years of his arduous struggle to put the Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds on a firm footing. There was great difficulty in persuading Mr Bisset to accept a testimonial, and he only consented to do so when it was proposed that the money should be expended on a picture, embodying a scene in the history of the hounds. So Mr Samuel Carter painted a picture, which I think was hung in the Royal Academy of 1871, representing a stag at bay, in Badgeworthy Water, with Mr Bisset on his favourite grey horse, the huntsman, the whips and half-a-dozen celebrated hounds. And this was presented to Mr Bisset at a great public banquet at Doncaster on the 14th of September 1871.

Moreover, that year 1870 was marked by another notable event in the history of the Devon and Somerset. John Babbage resigned the horn and was succeeded by Arthur Heal, the best huntsman Exmoor has ever seen. For some years, whilst I was editing a well-known journal which devoted more space to hunting than any of its contemporaries, Arthur used to supply me every week with his own notes of the runs they had had and the deer killed. All wire and whipcord was Arthur Heal, and his tough frame defied wind and weather and fatigue. The longest day never seemed to tire him, and up to the last, when he had been as whip and huntsman with these hounds for three-and-thirty years, he could still ride away from every one on the moor.

So well were deer preserved that Exmoor soon began to suffer from a plethora of stags and hinds; their numbers became positively a nuisance, and the question was how to keep them down. A strange contrast to the state of affairs when Mr Bisset first took the hounds! But what annoyed the Master most was the crowd that mobbed the hounds on opening days, especially at Cloutsham and on the Quantocks; for, the chase of the wild stag had become fashionable, and the fields grew troublesome and unwieldy. The deer were to some extent kept down by killing sometimes three or four in a day, but the visitors it was impossible to keep down, however much the genuine sportsman, somewhat selfishly perhaps, might resent their intrusion.

So 'all went merry as a marriage-bell,' till the fatal month of January 1879, when rabies broke out among the hounds in such a virulent form that the whole pack had to be destroyed, and all the work of five-and-twenty years was thus practically undone in a moment. 'It was a bitter pill to swallow,' wrote Mr Bisset to a friend, 'but there was no help for it.' Yet, with the same indomitable resolution never to despair which had characterised him all along, Mr Bisset at once set about forming a new pack, and in the August of that year he was honoured by a visit from the Prince of Wales, who enjoyed a good run, was duly in at the death, and, in accordance with immemorial custom, with his own hand drew the knife across the throat of the stag at bay.

In 1880 Mr Bisset was persuaded to put himself up as Parliamentary candidate for West Somerset, in opposition to the representative of the Acland interest. He was successful, but he found the atmosphere of the House of Commons very distasteful to him. 'I assure you,' he said with great earnestness to the farmers at his annual hunt dinner, 'that I would far sooner be anywhere on Exmoor except the Chains [the worst bit of bog on the moor] than in the House of Commons.'

A severe fall which he had in 1875, not out hunting, but as he was trotting out of a dealer's yard, when his horse reared and fell back upon him on the hard road, had inflicted injuries from which he never thoroughly recovered; for he was a man of great bulk and stature, six feet two inches in height, with broad frame and large limbs, and could not have ridden less than twenty stone, though no one who saw him following hounds on one of his big weight-carriers would have thought it. A heavy fall to such a man could not fail to be serious. But, though he must often have suffered great pain, he never showed it or spoke of it, till in 1881 his failing health warned him that the time had come for him to cease hunting. And so, after seven-and-twenty years of the most successful sport ever known on Exmoor, Mr Fenwick Bisset resigned the Mastership which he had held so worthily. He did not very long survive his resignation. On the 7th of July 1884 he died at Bagborough, lamented by every man who had ever hunted with the Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds.

Though he began stag-hunting without the slightest knowledge of the sport, Mr Bisset's observation was so keen and his power of acquiring and retaining information so quick and apt that when he retired it could, without doubt, be said of him that he knew the science of hunting the wild deer better than any man living. His knowledge of the habits and runs of the deer, too, was most remarkable.

The following instance was given by a correspondent of *The Field* at the time of Mr Bisset's death:—'About the year 1873, the hounds drove a stag from Withypool, in the south-eastern corner of the district, far westward from the forest of Dartmoor. The pace was tremendous. On they went from one end to the other, and finally, bearing right handed, lost their deer in the sea by Porlock Weir. For over twenty miles the pack had raced without a check, and had at last disappeared from all. One who had struggled to a standstill finally found himself in Porlock village, and there heard that an hour before hounds had passed close by towards the sea. He jumped on a pony to find out the end, reflecting with no little satisfaction that he would get to the finish—never mind when—and that after all there would be no one but himself to determine the time. On he went as fast as he could kick his pony along, scrambled to the top of the rough beach, and there, a few yards below, by the incoming tide, stood the stalwart form of Mr Bisset surrounded by his hounds, and watching through his glasses the deer swimming safely away in the far distance.'

Another instance equally remarkable occurred on the 7th of September 1875. A stag was found in East Down Wood (Bray), and killed in two hours and five minutes at Poole Bridge, after a run of about twenty miles from end to end of the moor. Only seven were at the end, but among them was Mr Bisset, who, being unable to ride much, had *driven* by Simonsbath and the Warren, and ridden the last two miles over Lucott Moor. Instinctively he took the chord of the arc, and was in at the end, though without seeing a hound for twelve miles.

'Towards the end of his Mastership,' says the Hon.

John Fortescue, 'Mr Bisset could no longer ride as at the beginning, but his keen eye saw more than did many of the thrusters. While the tufters were drawing, he was always to be seen in some commanding position, standing bolt upright as when he was a subaltern in the King's Dragoon Guards, and watching the proceedings through an opera-glass. This and his brief terse way of giving orders earned for him the name of the "General," by which, curiously enough, he had been known in his young days in the regiment.

'He spoke little, and then always slowly and deliberately in a deep bass voice. Nothing annoyed him so much as a pushing, chattering stranger ; and he would put down such an one with an epigrammatic decision which was peculiarly his own. Frantic people galloping up with reports of deer were often treated somewhat unceremoniously or subjected to a searching examination on minute points which few could pass. Such interviews he generally concluded with an oracular cough of peculiar vigour, or with the question : "Has any one else seen this so-called stag?"'

Mr Bisset's generosity did not end with his death. He provided by his will that his small property at Exford, where he had built kennels, stables, and dwellings at a cost of £7000, might be leased for a term of twenty-one years 'by the Master for the time being of the stag-hounds, and any four members of the committee, so long as the hunting were continued in the same manner as it had been during his Mastership, and during the time wherein Lord Ebrington had held command since his retirement.' The rent required was but £70 per annum, practically covered by the seventeen acres of land belonging to the Exford property.

The existence of the Hunt, nay, the very existence of the wild deer in England, is his monument; but he left one more imperishable in the country of his adoption. 'Mention his name,' says Mr Fortescue, 'to any of the yeomen or farmers who knew him in the stag-hunting district, and they will say, "Mr Bisset—ah! he was a good gentleman." *A good gentleman!* Take the words as they are spoken in their fullest sense, and you can add nothing to give higher praise. Such Mr Bisset was, and as such he is, and will be, remembered by high and low in North Devon and West Somerset.'

Lord Ebrington accepted the Mastership of the Devon and Somerset on Mr Bisset's resignation, and thus once more the hounds went back to the ancient Devonshire house of Fortescue. Lord Ebrington had been entered to stag by the immortal 'Jack' Russell, and proud his lordship was of the fact, while it is certain that the prince of sporting parsons was equally proud of his pupil, who hunted Exmoor for seven years with credit to himself and satisfaction to his followers. And, considering that most of them were keen critics, who swore by Mr Bisset as the greatest Master that ever was, I think this must be admitted to be high praise.

On resigning the Mastership in 1888, Lord Ebrington found a worthy successor in a notable west country sportsman, Mr Charles Henry Basset, of Umberleigh, Watermouth, and Pilton House, North Devon. Born in 1834, Mr Basset comes of a good old Cornish family and is the fifth son of Sir William Williams, Bart. of Tregullow, Cornwall. His father was a Master of Fox-hounds, and the son inherited the paternal tastes, but had little chance of gratifying them in his youth; for, at the age of thirteen, he entered the Royal Navy as a naval cadet on board H.M.S. *Southampton*, and for twelve years saw plenty of active service, first in putting down the West African slave trade and then in the more stirring incidents of the war with Russia. He was twice honourably mentioned in despatches for his gallantry and seamanship, and would, without doubt, have risen to distinction in his profession had he chosen to remain in the Navy. But in 1860 he married Harriett May Basset daughter of Arthur Davie Basset of Watermouth Castle, Ilfracombe, and thenceforward gave up the sea and settled down to the congenial life of a country gentleman. Twenty years later, on the death of the Rev. Arthur Crawford Davie Basset without issue, his brother-in-law succeeded to the estates and took the name of Basset.

A keen sportsman and a bold horseman, he soon made his mark in the hunting-field as a thorough workman with hounds. In 1872 he met with a terrible misfortune, for, while manipulating an engine on his model farm, his left hand was caught in the machinery, and so mutilated as to necessitate amputation. Nevertheless, he hunted as vigorously as ever and, with only one hand and a snaffle bridle, held his own splendidly with the foremost riders of Devon. That he is a first-rate judge of hounds any one who saw the Devon and Somerset under his Mastership will readily admit. For, in a pack made up of dog-hounds drafted as too big from all the leading kennels in England there was a level excellence and symmetry which rejoiced the eye of every critic of hound-breeding. Twenty-six inches was Mr Basset's standard, and not one of these big hounds seemed to deviate by a hair's breadth from that height. I remember hearing one of the best judges of hounds in England say that Mr Basset's pack was 'a triumph of scientific selection.'

C. H. Russet.

Under Mr Basset's management the popularity of the Devon and Somerset among 'fashionable visitors' rose to such a height that old stagers said the sport was being utterly ruined by the huge fields. But Mr Basset combined most happily the *suaviter in modo* with the *fortiter in re*, and the way he kept the field in order was a thing to admire and wonder at. At the time when the Speakership of the House of Commons was vacant, on the retirement of Mr Peel, I remember hearing a Q.C. and M.P. who had been hunting with the Devon and Somerset, say, that after seeing the discipline preserved among the field down there, he believed Charley Basset was the best man he knew in England to fill the post of Speaker. But Mr Basset had had six years' experience of Parliament (he was M.P. for Barnstaple from 1868 to 1874), and would probably have any day rather read the Riot Act to the biggest mob of thrusters that ever gathered at Cloutsham on an opening day than have attempted to keep order in the House of Commons when an Irish debate was on.

After a most successful tenure of office, Mr Basset, in 1894, resigned the Mastership, and was succeeded by Mr R. A. Sanders, under whom the noble sport of hunting the wild red deer enjoys undiminished popularity.

I cannot take my leave of the Devon and Somerset without mentioning one fact which will be of peculiar interest to literary men, and particularly to lovers of Shakespeare. It was while hunting the wild stag on Exmoor that the Right Honourable D. H. Madden, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Dublin, and one of the Judges of the Queen's Bench in Ireland, conceived the idea of his delightful book, *The Diary of Master*

William Silence, a study of Shakespearian and Elizabethan sport which I commend to all lovers of hunting and of Shakespeare. 'In each succeeding autumn,' says the author, 'the thoroughly Shakespearian character of the sport of stag-hunting and of its surroundings impressed me the more.' And so he set himself to collecting all the scattered allusions to field sports in Shakespeare, who was, he contends, thoroughly versed in hunting as it was then pursued in Gloucestershire and is still pursued in Exmoor. There is an extraordinary light thus thrown on many passages of Shakespeare which have puzzled commentators, who were no sportsmen, but a key to which is to be found in the hunting of the wild stag in Devon and Somerset.

'If,' says Mr Justice Madden, 'we would realise in some degree the England of three centuries ago, we must seek it in the moorland districts of the west, where the general elevation of the surface has restricted the area of cultivation to the bottoms and the lower slopes of the hills. Vast tracts of upland remain unenclosed, the haunt of red deer and moorland ponies. There also primitive manners linger, and ancient sport survives. The hart is hunted as he was hunted throughout England when Elizabeth was Queen. *The Noble Arte of Venerie* is still cited as an authority. The village fair; the wrestling green; the songs and catches of villagers in the inn kitchen; parson and yeoman discoursing at the covert side on the mysteries of woodcraft; the hare hunt on the unenclosed hillside; the assembly on the opening day of the hunting season; the "mort o' the deer" in the moorland stream; the frank recognition of differences of rank; the old-world games; the harvest-home dinner,—are all stray wafts of the Elizabethan age.

No more than distant mutterings of the storms which have since broken over England have reached the lonely moors of Exe and Barle, and merry England, like the setting sun, lovingly lingers on the hillsides of the west.'

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